



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES

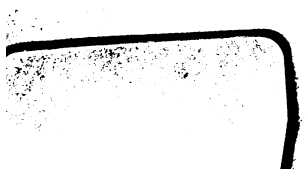


3 3433 07609447 7

JOSCELYN VERNON



ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL KNOWLES



22

333

7

1/60

Knockout

27

28

29

30

31

JOSCELYN VERNON.

A STORY OF THE DAYS OF KING
CHARLES THE FIRST.

BY

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL KNOWLES.

AUTHOR OF

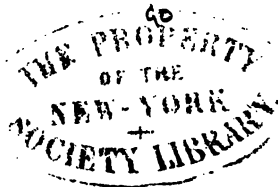
"ON WINGS OF FANCY," "TURNING POINTS," ETC.

PHILADELPHIA :

GEORGE W. JACOBS & Co.

103 South Fifteenth St.

1898.



1138458

COPYRIGHT, 1898,
BY
ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL KNOWLES.

F

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
I. How I came to go to the War	5
II. How I joined my Lord Herbert and had an Adventure	14
III. How we took Monmouth and I made a Dis- covery	26
IV. How I met a Strange Messenger on my Way to Tinterne	36
V. How I kept a Night-watch at Tinterne . . .	49
VI. How I saw the King and told my Story . . .	60
VII. How we lost the Battle of Naseby and escaped from Raglan	70
VIII. How I was taken Prisoner and met Cromwell	81
IX. How we had a Surprise at Raglan	93
X. How I lost Anthony	103
XI. How I met Dorothy again	110
XII. How I almost tasted of Death	115
XIII. How I was again taken Prisoner	127
XIV. How my Story ends	133

250

CHAPTER I.

HOW I CAME TO GO TO THE WAR.

IT is passing strange how in this fleeting life of ours, great national misfortunes so often bring to man as an individual the opportunity whereby he may attain glory and prominence. Nor need his success be the outcome of mere selfishness, but contrariwise it may be the result of pure patriotism, which, though the most noble cause may fail, may ultimately bring to those who engaged to defend it, worldly fortune and worldly honour.

Thus it was that the religious-political war that so devastated our goodly land of "Merrie England" in the days of King Charles—of most sainted memory—gave me the chance, not only to show my devotion to Church and Monarch, but also to carve out for myself a soldier's success and a soldier's renown.

I was but a stripling at the commencement

of the troubles, yet though young in years and smooth of face, for the down scarce grew upon my chin, I was tall and strong, and most skilful with the sword and rapier. Oft with my twin brother Anthony, who, with the same blue eyes, brown hair and strength of frame as myself, was like unto me as one pea to another, and not seldom taken for me, did I while away the hours, in brotherly rivalry striving to see who most excelled in feint, thrust and parry, with the result that fencing with the rapier became as natural to both of us as swimming in the neighboring brook was to the jolly knaves of the village.

We came of a goodly stock, my father boasting of a long and pure descent through many generations of Vernons, and though our family was but one of the country gentry, we were regarded with respect by many of the nobility, who, though rich in titles, often could not boast of the same pure ancestry as ours.

My great-grandsire had been knighted in the days of bluff King Hal, and oft-times had been treated with much show of friendship by

that monarch, who not seldom met my ancestor in the company of my Lord of Raglan, of whose family more hereafter. My great-grand-sire, however, soon fell out of the king's good graces, for being an honest and God-fearing man, he durst not countenance such an adulterous life, as he considered that the frequent marriages of the king showed; so presently withdrawing from the gay world, he sought his estates near the beautiful Vale of Tinterne, and passed the remainder of his life in the calm retirement of a country gentleman.

Until the last he was a firm adherent of the old Mother Church of England, and ever one of the most leal and loyal supporters of the various reforms which Cranmer and others were bringing about for the Church's purification from wrong doctrines and practices. Yet in sorrow and anger did he view the rapid demolition of the abbeys and monasteries and the confiscation of their domains and income by the rapacious king and nobles. Oft-times whilst he strove to be loyal to his king, would he bring down his hand in anger upon the

table, until everything rattled, as he heard some fresh story of outrage and sacrilege.

My grandsire and father held much the same views, and ever firm in resisting Papist errors on the one hand and Protestant innovations on the other, even through the troublous times of Queen Mary, oft called the Bloody, it is not to be wondered at that my brother Anthony and I should have imbibed these wholesome teachings and have followed on in the same path.

My mother—may her good soul rest in peace—had died in giving birth to my brother and myself, twins as I have already said ; but although we oft missed the love and sympathy that at times a mother alone can give, our life, nevertheless, was a happy one. In the society of our sire we led a quiet, uneventful existence, in the manly pursuits of what might be called a later chivalry, in wandering over the lovely Vale of Tinterne, or standing amid those romantic ruins which ever had a peculiar charm for both of us. In truth, as we grew towards manhood, these continual visits to Tinterne, coupled with its associations with the noble

and learned order of Cistercian Monks, aroused in Anthony such love of the Church, and of the glorious work done by her followers in the ages past, that he resolved to devote himself henceforth to the life of a priest.

This was a sore grief to me, not that I did not deem his resolve noble and self-sacrificing, and one for which his goodness and studious ways well fitted him, but I foresaw the personal loss to me of one who had been almost my only companion, dearer to me than any one else in the world.

It was at this juncture that the war broke out and our dear father, full of the patriotism that should actuate all loyal men when they see Church and King in danger, started, with a small chosen band of followers, to join the troops that my Lord Herbert, the eldest son of the Marquis of Worcester, was mustering to take to the aid of the King.

Our parting was a most affecting one, and even now as I, an aged man, write these annals of my life, it is as fresh and vivid to me as on the day when, unbeknown to us, our sire gave

us his last farewell: "My noble boys," quoth he, as climbing to the saddle he turned for a last word, "always be leal and loyal to your God and King. Ever remember the Lord Who made you, the Saviour Who redeemed you, and the King who ruleth by Divine permission. Joscelyn, ever have a care for thy brother, for, though Anthony seemeth as staunch and strong as thee, methinks he will yet need thine aid. Fare you well, lads, and may God bless you."

With lumps rising in our throats we watched him ride off, and then, too proud to let my brother see the tears that were misting my eyes—and feeling sure that Anthony was in like straits—I thrust my arm through his, and walking briskly to the great hall of the house, asked him to fence, hoping thereby to forget somewhat the sadness of parting.

Alas! That parting was not so soon to be forgotten, long being remembered as the last one in life, for, ere two days had passed, there arrived in haste a messenger, with the terrible news that my father, who had travelled towards Monmouth, had been surprised and shot down

by Puritan scouts, while passing along the wooded part of the road near that city.

In our sorrow, we had none to whom to turn except each other, but here, while Anthony was undoubtedly as much stricken as I, he failed to feel the wild rage and fierce longing of revenge at my father's murder—for such it seemed—that completely took possession of me, and though now, as I look back to that time, I would fain wish that I had felt otherwise, I cannot but admit that at the moment revenge soon drove away the keen anguish of my grief.

At the time, however, I turned in anger on my brother, and taunted him with little love for our father, and with faintheartedness in not wishing to avenge his death. Good though he was, I could see his ire rise, as, turning quickly upon me, he told me that I was unworthy of being a Vernon, to say such things to him.

I am shamed to admit that, angered beyond control, I drew back and struck him—the dearest companion of all my years—full in the

face, and still more so am I shamed when I recall him, as, rising from the ground where the blow had sent him, with the blood streaming from his face, he approached close to me, and with his hands clenched behind his back, and a smile more that of heaven than of earth lighting his face, he said in his usual soft musical voice, "Dost think it a right brotherly action, Joscelyn? Methinks, thou'rt over ready to strike, where it doth no good! It accordeth not well with our father's last request to thee!"

Nothing that he could have spoken could sooner have subdued my wrath, for in my ears seemed to sound my father's words, "Joscelyn, have a care to thy brother."

I was humble in my admission of error, but, as Anthony was never one to harbour aught but goodwill towards even his bitterest enemy—if ever he had one—it was not long ere, closeted together, we talked over our future prospects and plan of action.

I had resolved to take my father's place and join Lord Herbert, and naught that my brother


could say could turn me from my purpose. Not only did the honour of the Vernons seem to call me to this, but also I longed to strike a blow for the good cause, against those who, in a few hours, had made us fatherless. Anthony, though equally skilled with the sword, still adhered to his plan of entering the Church, resolving, however, to remain for the present where he was, in order to watch over our estates and straighten out anything pertaining to matters of business necessary to settle, on account of our father's death.

The next day was a sad one for us, for it brought to us our dear father's body, sadly mutilated by his enemies. His funeral had to be hurried and quiet, none besides his sons and his tenants being present.

That afternoon I donned my war-harness, and, accompanied by six faithful followers, with old Simon Lyall, who had long been with our family, as my esquire, I bade good-bye to Anthony and my old home, and started towards Raglan, with sad enough heart, in truth, yet, notwithstanding, sanguine of earning for myself some measure of renown.

CHAPTER II.

HOW I JOINED MY LORD HERBERT AND HAD AN ADVENTURE.

 HAD purposely taken a circuitous route to Raglan, as I feared that in going by the more direct way we might come upon scattered bands of soldiers belonging to Monmouth, which city had recently declared for the Parliament.

I was young to be leading a band of men to war, yet it pleased me to see with what respect my few followers regarded me. Now that I was arrayed in war-harness, they seemed to think of me, no longer as a young stripling playing at fence, but as their master leading them where duty called.

It was dark long ere we reached the park surrounding the massive buildings of Raglan, for the route we had travelled covered a goodly number of miles.

Perhaps there has been no more famous

fortress in England than this stately pile,—and as we saw its massive towers, its giant keep, and its battlemented walls, in truth, we thought it a noble place, showing fair and goodly, yet grim and shadowy in the pale moonlight. As we paused for a moment to survey this castle, from time to time we could faintly hear the sound of revelry resounding within, yet outside all seemed sleeping in a mystic stillness, only disturbed by the sweet chirping of a few belated birds, wooing each other in the fragrant foliage of the trees growing thickly about.

I have always been susceptible to the charms of fair women and to the charms of nature, and I know not how long I should have stood drinking in the peace and loveliness of this forest scene, contrasting so much with the grim walls before us, had I not been called to myself by a summons from the castle. There, those on guard, seeing our party grouped together, began to suspect some plot or surprise. Men-at-arms appeared at the gate and on the ramparts, but my answer reassured them, for

on approaching the entrance and announcing my name and purpose we were allowed to enter. We passed beneath the low portcullis and gate, flanked by massive towers, and were admitted to the spacious courtyard within.

I was somewhat surprised at the few persons I saw lounging about, but when I came to know this mighty fortress better I found that with its huge courts (the one called the Fountain, the other the Pitcher), its vast halls and ramparts, even a garrison of large size would seem small when scattered about.

Scarce, however, had I time for such observations, for the messenger returning bade some retainers take good care of my followers and then led me to the Great Hall, where the Marquis of Worcester, the owner of Raglan, and my Lord Herbert, his eldest son, were entertaining a goodly company of gay cavaliers.

On the way we passed several ladies who with their maids were ascending the steep stairs to their apartments. One who was pointed out to me as the Lady Dorothy, daughter of Sir Gerald Arden, was most beau-

tiful, of stately presence, with dark eyes, red-brown hair and lovely colouring. Of her, however, more later.

As we approached the revellers, they were drinking to the health of the king, and the huge hall, with its fine oaken roof and rafters, resounded with the old song :

“ Our donjon-tower is stout and tall,
Each rampart manned and steady ;
And loyal hearts from every wall,
Shout, ‘ *Roundheads !* We are ready !’

Then here’s a health to *Charles* our king ;
And eke to noble *Worcester !*
To each to-morrow’s fight shall bring
New loyalty and lustre !

Then hoist the Royal Standard high !
And crown our *Chief* with laurels !
And where’s the man that would not die
In combating for *Charles ?*”

There was a loud clinking of glasses, after which all drank long and deep and sat down, Some degree of order then ensued, save where some cavalier, boasting but a light head or already well filled with goodly wine, sank drowsily in his seat or prattled on in a silly drunken way to his neighbors.

It was a few moments ere the Marquis caught sight of me. Then, obeying his call, I walked forward and saluting him and his son explained my errand. The Marquis was as courtly and handsome as ever, and notwithstanding his great age still had the mien of a warrior. He was mightily pleased, though withal amused at my youthful appearance and firm determination of fighting.

He was pleased to tell me that he well knew my father and that a nobler man never drew sword in defence of his king. Then he turned me over to his son, my Lord Raglan, who, every inch a soldier, ever inspired me with admiration. Lord Herbert shook me by the hand, told me that he would accept my services with both thanks and pleasure, and that if I so fancied would attach me as a lieutenant to his own troop of horse. Need I say that I was delighted, or that soon in company with that gay assemblage I was, in spirit, fighting the battles for the King, and drinking heavily to his health.

It was a foolish thing on my part, ill befit-

ting my quiet bringing up at Vernon Hall, and late that night, with sadly bemuddled wits, I left the banqueting room to sleep off the effects of my first carouse.

Those were gay times, however, and though I like not now to recall such foolishness, he were a strong man then who, where all about him were revelling, could resist and say nay !

Early the following morning I awoke, with the heavy, stupid feeling that one always experiences after a night of revelling, and thinking to put myself in better spirits, I dressed and walked out upon the ramparts. Never shall I forget the view on that fair morning. Far below me lay the smiling fields and meadows of Monmouthshire, bordered by mountains and hills to the north and west, the dew still on the grass, sparkling and flashing in the rays of the newly risen sun. It was a sight for the gods, and I drank my fill and was turning away when I caught sight of a white scarf waving in the wind. I had but a glimpse of what seemed like a maiden's form ere it disappeared in the green woods that came close up to the castle.

Full of curiosity, and actuated by a strange feeling that she, whosoever she might be, was in danger, I made my way to the entrance of the castle, and finding no objection made to my leaving it—for as yet war had not assumed a very serious aspect in the neighborhood of Raglan—I hastened after the maiden of the white scarf. I had a vague idea that it was the Lady Dorothy, whom I had seen the night before.

I entered the woods, but for a while saw no sign of her whom I had noticed from the castle wall, and I was about to conclude that it was but fancy or imagination, although I fain would that it were not, when several piercing screams, rapidly succeeding one another, startled me into life and action. Dashing toward the point from which they seemed to come, but somewhat impeded in my movements by the thick underbrush, I came into collision with a man running in the opposite direction. The shock caused him to stagger and fall to the ground, and seeing by his clothes that he savoured of being a "Round-

head," and thinking that he might have had something to do with the screams I had heard, I dealt him a blow with the hilt of my sword and hurried on.

In scarce a minute I reached an open space in the greenwood, where, lying on the ground, was the white form of a girl, her forehead disfigured by an ugly gash, from which the blood was coming. In an instant I had torn off part of my linen ruff and had staunched and bound up the wound, after which I pressed to the girl's lips a bottle of strong cordial that I always carried with me. Then, as I saw her coming to herself, I bethought me of the ruffian I had struck, and I hurried back to where I had left him, but, though a few blood-matted leaves showed where he had fallen stunned and cut by my blow, he himself had disappeared.

On rejoining the maiden, I found her sitting up, looking in a half-dazed way about her. I approached in a shy, awkward fashion, for not only was I very much unused to the society of the fair sex, but also was I somewhat at a

loss how to explain my presence there and my rather peculiar situation. I could not but notice, however, the beauty of her who sat before me. Waving hair of chestnut-brown, dark eyes veiled with long lashes, soft and beautiful colouring of face, coupled with a figure slender and girlish yet of charming outline, made her a picture of maidenly loveliness, such as I had seen only in my dreams, and, though ever on the guard against such a foolish procedure as love at first sight, I felt it would require little urging for me to become her knight-errant, and wear her colours.

"May I ask, strange sir, whom I am to thank for this opportune service?" questioned the maid, as, rising, she looked at me, somewhat embarrassed to be sure, but infinitely more self-possessed than myself.

"Joscelyn Vernon," replied I. "And pray, may I too ask who it has been my good fortune to help, and beg thou tellest me what has happened?"

"My name is Dorothy Arden," she answered, and then continuing she told me that she was

staying at the castle, that as was her wont she had wandered off for a walk into the woods, never suspecting danger, and suddenly coming upon three men, she had screamed in alarm, whereupon one had struck her, and the others had fled ; that this was all that she could remember.

I was then in the presence of the fair Dorothy Arden, the daughter of Sir Gerald Arden, a colonel of the King's troops, and an old friend of my father. I forebore mentioning this, however, as I scorned in this way to arouse in her any interest in me.

Mistress Dorothy was profuse in her thanks whilst on the way back to the castle, to which she had told me to conduct her. Perhaps I flattered myself that I was not lacking in comeliness or in that manly strength so calculated to win a maiden's heart. Be that as it may, ere we left the cover of the wood I had persuaded her to give me a bow of white ribbon which she took from her dress, for me to wear as her champion. She gave me this with such a charming smile and winsome blush, saying,

in jest, "Remember, Master Joscelyn, thou art henceforth my gallant knight, never to fail me when wanted. Pledge me thy word ever to save me from all my enemies, as thou didst to-day," that becoming bolder and more valiant, I could not resist the temptation, but suddenly bending forward, kissed her reverently on the forehead. With a deep flush, she quickly disengaged herself, and without looking at me again, before I could stop her she hurriedly walked across the open space to the castle, and disappeared within the gate.


Disappointed and somewhat fearful at the result of what I had done, I waited a few moments, so that no one could see us together and thus question me, and then followed her to the fortress. I, however, saw no further sign of my new lady-love.

That afternoon, in the midst of the preparations for departure, I thought much and oft of our meeting, and my spirits fell as I realized that Mistress Dorothy was the daughter of a knight closely attached to the King, whilst I was but a plain country gentleman, who for

all my long ancestry would be regarded as beneath her. Faint heart, however, never won fair lady, as I had oft heard my grandsire say, so I resolved that come what would I would at least so comport myself as to win success as a soldier.

CHAPTER III.

HOW WE TOOK MONMOUTH, AND I MADE A DISCOVERY.

ORD HERBERT of Raglan, though a Papist, was probably one of the staunchest friends that King Charles ever had. He was devoted to his Majesty, and like his noble father, the Marquis of Worcester, who helped the King so much with loans of money, rendered his service with a heart and willingness that contributed greatly to the efficiency of it.

He had resolved to surprise and possess Monmouth and hold it for the King, and for this purpose with scant loss of time had raised a force of almost two thousand men, one-fourth being cavalry.

Early on the morning following that of my adventure, with jingling of spurs, clanking of swords and ringing of armour, in gallant array we issued from the Castle on our ex-

pedition of war. The ladies stood on the galleries and grand staircase to bid us God speed, and many a cheering word greeted our soldierly bearing. In vain, however, I looked for Mistress Dorothy. I began to fear that either her wound in her forehead troubled her or else she was too much offended to see me again, even at a distance where no recognition need be made.

As we neared a turn of the road, which would hide the Castle from our sight, I glanced back, and fancied that I saw the wave of a white scarf, from one of the windows far up in the giant Keep. It may have been my imagination, but as I knew that Mistress Dorothy had the privilege of going whither she would in the Castle, I would fain believe that it was she. I rode away, therefore, with a lighter heart, proud of wearing my bow of white ribbon (about which some of my companions sported me, though they knew not whose colours I wore), and proud of riding close to my Lord of Raglan, in his own troop.

On nearing Monmouth we halted, and while

reconnoitering the position of the Parliamentarians, whom I regarded as rebels, we were joined by some cavalry from the Lord of Goodrich Castle. Having well marked the enemy's position, Lord Herbert selected some forty of his followers and proposed that they should seize a large earthen fortification which the Roundheads had thrown up outside of the town. Calling me to his side he said: "Thou art over young for warfare, I know, but I desire to see the stuff thou art made of. Do thou take command of the balance of my troop of horse, and if we take the mound the moment we cut the chain of the drawbridge join us at full gallop, and enter the town that way."

He pointed to the tiny river Monnow, over which was the bridge, with tower and archway above, now manned by the enemy's marksmen. I bowed low to Lord Herbert and thanked him for his confidence, and then, as with a smile that gallant soldier rode off, I placed myself at the head of the troop and awaited the signal.

It was not long in coming, for so fiercely rode Lord Raglan and his cavalry, that though the Parliamentary soldiers made some show of fighting, they could not withstand our men, but fleeing away from the ditches, were cut down almost to a man. In a moment our troopers had severed the chains of the bridge, which rattled down, and together we dashed at full gallop into the town, suffering, however, some slight loss as we rushed across the river.

A shot struck my left arm, and mad with pain I made a savage lunge at the pikeman opposing me and ran him through the heart. Never shall I forget that dying look, as in the moment of drawing away my sword, I saw the first man I had killed, gasping out his life at my feet. Alas! I have killed many an one since then, though I trust always in a righteous cause—notwithstanding my brother Anthony says no cause warrants death—yet that dying look still haunts me!

A truce, however, to such reflections, for it was but the work of a moment. The place was ours, and Colonel Broughton with his army

and the City Committee had to surrender as prisoners of war.

Late that afternoon, Lord Raglan sent for me, and after complimenting me for what he was pleased to term my gallantry and bravery, though I see little that I did, he asked about my arm. On being assured it was nothing, he told me that he was going to make me the bearer of despatches to Colonel Lawley, who was marching toward Gloucester. Colonel Lawley, Lord Raglan said, was new to the region and was unaware that his march might be opposed by the rabble who dwelt in the Forest of Dean, the wooded region on the banks of the lower Wye. These people, he feared, by surprising Lawley might completely demoralize his forces.

"It will be a difficult undertaking," continued Lord Herbert, "but thou canst do it, I think; and as thou art little known as a trooper, there may be least suspicion attached to thy going. Leave in cover of darkness and haste thee down, not by land but by water, for there I think thou wilt not be interrupted.

Meet Lawley some miles below Tinterne, but if aught evil befalls thee, let it be thy chief care to destroy the despatches. Thou needest no inducement to do thy duty. Nevertheless if thou succeedest I will mention thee to the King."

I bowed my thanks, for Lord Raglan's mention of me to the King would be the making of me. As I went from the room, I noticed that the door, which had stood slightly ajar, had been pulled close, as if some one had gone out, but I did not think much of it at the time.

My preparations were few. I took a long cloak, which, hiding my sword and armour, rendered me less liable to notice, and, donning a plain citizen's hat, of the kind generally seen in those parts, I waited until it grew dark, and then sallied from my lodging for my rather perilous undertaking.

The city was quiet, save for the sounds of revelry that could now be heard in some quarters of the town, where officers as well as the common soldiers made merry over their victory. The streets seemed deserted, excepting

near the walls, and where our troops were camped. Here the sentinels watched, pacing up and down.

Avoiding the river, and threading my way through a series of small, half-deserted alleys, for since a boy I had known Monmouth by heart, I soon gained the edge of the town. There, crawling on my hands and feet, I evaded the attention of the sentinel. I had been told by Lord Herbert, that not even a sentinel must know of my departure, as he was not sure of all of his men, and spies were believed to be on every side.

The lay of the ground here favoured me, for but a few hundred yards from the limits of the town extended the woods. Reaching their cover, I arose to my full height and was about to proceed when it seemed to me that I saw a light some distance ahead. It would not do to be seen by any one in these woods, for they could be none but enemies or Roundheads, yet I determined to approach closer if possible, in the hope that I might learn of something of importance to us.

A happy idea seized me. Now that I was out of the town and free from discovery or interruption from our own troops, I would seek the river, and follow it down to where the fire seemed to be, and escape detection in that way.

It took me, however, some little time to reach it, so carefully had I to move, but presently I saw the black water before me, gleaming even in the darkness, so rapid was the stream. Hidden by the banks, stealthily I crept along, and presently I saw the blaze of the fire, and came within the sound of the voices. Taking off my hat, so as to lessen the chance of being seen, I raised myself carefully, until I could see the faces of those gathered about the fire.

Never had I beheld a more sinister, ugly set of rascals, and, although I have no love for those enemies of the King—God rest his soul—the Parliamentary troops, they were, at least, benign creatures to these, their allies, whom I saw at once were those who, dwelling in the Forest of Dean, had made that neighborhood infamous.

There were six in all, and in one, who was dressed a little differently from the others, I recognized the assailant of Mistress Dorothy, whom I had come upon in the woods, that day, near Raglan Castle. He was now speaking.

Imagine my dismay when I found that I was the subject of his address. I heard him telling the group, that I was now with my Lord Herbert, and that, in my absence, it would be a fit opportunity to go and burn Vernon Hall, taking what booty could be found. "For that canting milksop, Anthony, is also away, and we may never have such another chance," growled he, in conclusion.

"Prithee, why this hatred of the Vernons, friend Jervis?" quoth a big fellow, who was lying at full length on the ground. "Surely, even we don't war against lads!"

"Lads! I care not if lads or lasses, so I can once settle the score I have against these Vernons! Dost remember the father?" questioned he called Jervis.

"Ay, the one thou laidst low at the turn of the road, some time since? What of him?"

Isn't he dead enough now?" replied a swarthy-faced, dirty-looking man, who seemed to act partly as sentinel, partly as counsellor.

"Dead! yes, dead; but I wish I could kill him a thousand times, and gloat over his death!" said Jervis. But I heard no more, for, in my mingled horror and rage at seeing before me the murderer of my father, I had raised myself to my feet, hardly knowing what I was doing. I should have been discovered, if a stone beneath me had not rolled away, dropping me into the swift current of the river.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW I MET A STRANGE MESSENGER ON MY WAY TO TINTERNE.

LIKE a flash it crossed my mind, that if discovered it would mean not only death to me, but also peril to Colonel Lawley through the failure of the despatches reaching him. In an instant I had determined what to do, and ere the outlaws had reached the banks of the stream, under the water I was swimming with the current. Being expert in this respect, by the time I came up to breathe I was hidden from sight, not only by a turn in the winding stream, but also by the thick darkness which concealed all objects but those close at hand.

Fortunately for me, the outlaws, sensible of the close proximity of the town, and realizing their danger if discovered, did not shout or use torches to ascertain if anyone had been spying upon them. Thus favoured by darkness and

current I was soon a good mile down the river, when deeming that I was safe, I turned towards the shore and climbed up its sandy beach.

My teeth chattered with the cold, my body ached with my long swim, while to make matters still worse, a heavy rain had begun to fall, which though it could not make me any more wet than I was, certainly added much to my discomfort. I could not go on in such a condition, so I looked around for some place of shelter, determined to take my chances of detection to dying of the cold.

Climbing up the bank I made out a light in what seemed to be an old farmhouse. Hurrying to it, I knocked at the door. A short delay followed, during which I could distinguish a sound as of whispering. Then the fastenings were drawn aside and an old man bade me enter, bolting and barring the door after me.

The room was small and dimly lighted, and for a moment I hardly noticed the two other occupants, as telling mine host that I had started to walk from Monmouth to ennalt (a

place nearby) and had been caught in the storm, thus accounting for the wet condition of my clothes, I essayed to kick off my wet boots, affecting at the same time an air of assurance and nonchalance that I was far from feeling.

This done, I seated myself on the chair that the farmer had placed for me before the fire and glanced at my companions. I rested my eyes but a moment on mine host, who seemed an honest-looking fellow, though not over-blessed with comeliness. Then passing over the elder of the two women, who, aged and almost blind, seemed content to sit in her chair and turn her thumbs, I fixed my gaze on the other occupant of the room.

It was all that I could do to repress a cry of amazement ; for there, unless my very eyes deceived me, was Dorothy Arden, now, however, as demure as could be. As her gaze met mine, never a sign of recognition did she give. Could I be dreaming? I had seen her but once save the time she had been pointed out to me ascending the Castle stair, yet surely

in her who sat before me, though dressed in a common gown, was Dorothy again ! It was fortunate for me that the farmer and his wife were old and did not notice my agitation, for it might have led to some unpleasant questioning.

I sank into a sort of a reverie, as I looked into the fire, for during the last few hours I had had revealed to me portions of mysteries that I could not fathom. In vain had I searched my mind as to who was the outlaw called Jervis, and as to why he bore such a hatred to my family ; in vain had I tried to find a reason for his murder of my father. Now, as I sat brooding by the fire, the thought flashed upon my mind that perhaps Mistress Dorothy would be the means of unravelling the mystery, as she in some strange way seemed closely connected with each appearance of this outlaw in my life. It was a wild fancy, I well knew, and yet I could not dismiss it from my mind.

I turned to where Dorothy—or she whom I took for her—had been sitting, but her chair was empty. As I started in my surprise, for

I had not heard the faintest sound as of her leaving, my ear caught the catching of a latch, and glancing quickly to the old farmer, I found him intently watching me, though he at once looked away when he saw that I had observed his look. "'Tis Milly going to see about the cattle," said he, as if in explanation.

That remark determined me. No one in such a storm and at such an hour of night ever went to "see about cattle." This old man, honest as he looks, is a rascal, thought I, but Dorothy—how could I explain her presence here? No wonder that I felt mystified!

A few minutes later I asked the man to show me to my room, and on the way there inquired if "Milly," as he called Mistress Dorothy, was his daughter, merely using this as a bait to draw him out.

"Oh no! only a guest," he replied, with a strange sort of a laugh, that seemed to debar further questioning.

He left me as puzzled as ever, but determined not to remain there any longer than I could help. These dwellers in the Wye woods

have an unsavoury reputation, and as many attributed murders to them, I felt that my surroundings were too uncanny for me to stay amid them.

Soon I saw the lights go out downstairs and all became quiet save for the patter of the rain on the roof and trees. Walking to a little low window I looked out. It opened upon a shed. The window was fastened, but it was but the work of a minute for me to insert my poniard and draw the hasp, when quickly letting myself down to the roof of the shed, I dropped to the ground. I walked rapidly towards the river, the patter of the rain helping to drown any sounds that I may have made in making my escape.

I breathed more freely now that I was out of the house, for though I hardly suspected that the occupants themselves would harm me, I well knew that the country people round about were in sympathy with the residents of Monmouth, who had declared for the Parliament and might not hesitate to deliver to his enemies any one suspected of being an

adherent of the King. Even the storm seemed preferable to such an ending to my ambition.

As I hurried to the river bank it seemed to me that I heard the sound of horse's hoofs on the road below the house. It made me hasten my steps. Ere I reached the river, however, I had determined to abandon my plan of taking one of the farmer's boats and going in it down the stream, for I suspected that if there was any plot against me, my enemies would seek the river at once.

Here my knowledge of the locality stood me in good stead. Any one who has journeyed on this River Wye, so beautiful on a clear day, with its ever-changing views of forest and meadow, hills and cliffs, will recall its many devious windings which make the trip by water almost double the distance by road. I now remembered a short cut that my brother and I had once taken in some of our boyish travels. It lay through the woods for almost two miles, when, turning sharply to the left, a stretch of another mile led directly to the river.

As I rapidly made my way along this, so dense was the undergrowth and so like an archway the foliage overhead, it required all of my woodman's knowledge to avoid going astray in the thick darkness. It was a weird, grewsome walk, for the wind sighed mournfully through the trees and the rain kept up a continual patter on the leaves. The foliage, however, kept me comparatively dry, and the exercise soon warmed my chilled body.

All other sounds had long since died away, and as I neared the end of the path I began to think that I was at last beyond all danger and could hasten to warn Colonel Lawley, and on my way back apprise Anthony of his danger, for, as I have said, Vernon Hall was not very far distant from Tinterne.

Deep in such thought I emerged from the road, but scarcely had I left the shadow of the trees ere I heard the sound of hoofs, and before I knew what to do, a horseman, who acted as if he had expected to meet me there, sprang off his horse and approached me with a despatch in his hand. I had my sword half

drawn, for I liked neither the sudden arrival of the man at such a place nor his appearance half hidden as he was in a long riding cloak. I might have killed him where he stood, for he made no motion of drawing a weapon, if he possessed any, but I could not in cold blood dispatch a man who had given me no real evidence of any evil intentions.

As he lighted a little lantern hanging by his saddle, and the flash shone on his face, it seemed familiar, but where I had seen it I could not imagine. Further speculation in this direction ended, however, as narrowly watching him, I opened the despatch and with astonishment read, written in a woman's hand :

“ Have a care, for though my messenger is trustworthy, he knoweth nothing of this. Lord Raglan is returned from Monmouth and bids *me* send this, as his men cannot be trusted, to tell thee to stop at Tinterne and after delivering thy despatches to a messenger who will meet thee at the ruined abbey, hasten to thy brother who is in danger. And above all things lose no time in reaching Tinterne. Inquire not of either messenger, but for love of me, do as I bid thee. Think not of me, for I am safe. God speed thee. Dorothy.”

I was thunderstruck! How could Lord Herbert know of Anthony's danger? Why should he take a woman into his confidence? Yet how else could she be aware of my mission as the bearer of important despatches? Though I had never seen Lady Dorothy's handwriting, her message would in a measure explain her appearance at the farmer's house. I reflected, too, that she with other ladies whilst at the Castle must frequently have seen Lord Raglan. Could he know of aught between us? Like a flash such thoughts passed through my mind. There seemed but one course for me to follow, to do what the letter commanded, strange as it all seemed, for there was little time to waste on inquiry.

I put a few questions to the messenger, not about the letter, but about himself, which he answered readily and satisfactorily enough, yet I could not but fancy his voice seemed somewhat feigned and unnatural.

I placed the despatch in my doublet, and giving the man a verbal message to take back, I saw him mount and ride away. When he

was out of sight, I sought for a boat along the river bank, and finding one half hidden in the bushes some twenty yards below the road, I launched it and proceeded down the stream.

It was as yet scarce midnight, for the events that I have recorded occupied but little time. The rain had ceased, and soon the clouds broke away. One by one the stars peeped out and the moon shed her glorious light over a scene still moist with the rain, but infinitely more cheerful now that the moon's rays tinged everything with a silver sheen.

My spirits began to rise, and the quiet that reigned around seemed to pervade my thoughts, which hitherto had been troubled by the strange events of the night. The river softly lapped the sides of the boat, the oars moved noiselessly save for the ripple of the drops as I raised my blades from the water, whilst from the forest or hills on either side came vague and indistinct sounds of animal life, noticeable in this wild region, yet toned down into such a quiet murmur that it soothed my spirits and rested my mind.

Some might have experienced a sense of fear at being alone at midnight in such a wild place, but I had come of a hardy stock, and, though keenly alive to danger when it really menaced, had slight regard for those senseless fears of visitants from another world, such as the present time might conjure up to the minds of many.


To me, now that some of my greatest anxiety was over, it was a pleasant experience, this midnight trip on the Wye. Oft had I journeyed over this lovely stream, and as the familiar landmarks stood out, the rolling hills, the quiet meadows, the whispering forest, beautiful and picturesque as ever, they seemed to assume strange and varied forms, as the lights and shadows caused by the moonlight played upon them.

When I came within sight of the Vale of Tintern, and saw the ivy-clad ruins of the ancient Abbey, dimmed and softened by the silvery light, it seemed to me, as it lay there on the banks of this limpid stream, hemmed in from the world by circular ranges of hills

and mountains, that it was holy ground, for had not the men of God once lived in that spot, and did not that ruined but noble pile still rear its head as a reminder both of the decay of earthly greatness and of the eternity of heavenly glory? Full of such thoughts, I beached my boat and stepped ashore, and, finding that the expected messenger had not yet arrived, I walked slowly towards the ruined pile.

CHAPTER V.

HOW I KEPT A NIGHT-WATCH AT TINTERNE.

N reaching the Abbey, I seated myself where I could command the view of the road, and see any one approaching. Then, meditatively, I glanced about the ruined pile. What a poem in stone it was! High above me rose the ruins of its graceful arches and soaring vaults, still beautiful in their desolation ; before me stretched what once had been nave and choir, ending in that loveliest of all windows, which, though now robbed of its ancient glass, by its stone mullions still charmed the fancy and delighted the eye ; and over to the left, through the vista of clustered columns and soaring arch, I could see the entrance to the Refectory and the apartments of the old monks.

How full of God's rest and peace seemed this venerable pile! What judgment had those holy monks shown in choosing such a spot!

What lovelier retreat from the world than this Vale of Tinterne! Even now that mass of crumbling stone, those overhanging oaks, that verdant turf, beautiful yet mystic in the moonlight, seemed to speak of another life, and to show God's handiwork in nature.

What a contrast was this to the scenes of war and bloodshed that recently my mind had been picturing as the fit realm for a brave man! Perhaps, after all, brother Anthony was right, in his higher estimate of life!

I do not know how to account for it, for I am not given to imagination, but be that as it may, presently it seemed to me as if this ancient pile was peopled with the shades of the past. I fancied that I was carried far back along the centuries of time. No longer was Tinterne a ruin, but was one of the goodliest and fairest of all monastic foundations. The Service of Compline was being sung, and as those white-robed Cistercian monks chanted their orisons, the music of their voices swelled through and through that vaulted space, rich and mellow, like unto the singing of angels.

Then, the service over, I saw those monks in silence separate, some to seek scant repose on the hard pallets in their narrow cells, others to keep the nightly vigil for the souls of the deceased.

As they passed me, with arms crossed on their breast, with heads bowed in prayer, and with a look of holy exaltation on their faces, their coarse woolen habits of white brushing against me where I sat, I fancied that they started as they saw me, and raised the crosses hanging at their girdled waist, as if they saw in me some strange and uncouth creature or demon ; then the bell began to toll the hour, and all of a sudden a rushing, swishing sound was heard and something struck me in the face— and *I awoke* and found that I had been dreaming, fallen asleep at my watch, to be aroused by flying bats, possibly disturbed from their lairs by a falling stone.

I must have been asleep some time, for though still dark, the eastern sky seemed growing brighter. I looked around for the messenger and at last made out a shrouded

figure, evidently searching for me on the banks of the stream, as he seemed to glance up and down.

I am ashamed to confess that for the first time in my life my dream had made me fearful, and for a moment the shrouded form startled me. Only for a moment, however, for I at once realized my foolishness, so giving a slight whistle to attract attention, I walked towards the shore.

As I approached, the figure drew its cloak more carefully over the face, and with a half-muffled request handed me a paper on which was written in the same writing as before :

"Give me the package for Colonel Lawley. If thou dost suspect the identity of the messenger say nothing, for we may be watched. Dorothy."

That slender form shown by the clinging folds of the cloak, that hand so white and delicately carven, could they belong to anyone but Dorothy herself! I handed out my packet, but disobeying all instructions, leaned forward and clasped her in my arms. Without a re-

sponsive movement, and with a dull, hard look in her eye, she disengaged herself, and standing erect said, in a tone I had never heard before, "How darest thou, sir! Fulfil thy part and leave love-making until more fitting moment! Go!"

Leave her alone, in that place by herself! Was she to go to Lawley with the packet! I started to say "No," that I would not leave her, that if my Lord of Raglan had no other messenger, I would accompany her or go alone as originally instructed; but with another imperious "Go, sir, else my lord shall know it," she sprang into the boat that I had drawn up on the shore and before I could arouse myself from a sort of trance of astonishment, she was speeding away down the river, wielding her oars as if the sturdiest of knaves.

With a curse I vowed never again to undertake such a mission, honour or no honour, for, young and sanguine as I was, a presentiment began to dawn upon me that all was not right.

Yet what could I do? It was useless to

pursue Dorothy, who had the packet. It was equally as useless to hasten to Colonel Lawley without it, for he would scorn such information as I could give him, as all of the contents of the packet were not known to me. In my pique and perplexity I decided to hurry at once to Vernon Hall, to which my heart impelled me to go, as Mistress Dorothy had said that my brother Anthony was in danger.

The morning was beginning to break when I started, tired out with the strange experiences of the night, but by noon I had reached the Hall of my ancestors. Never had the old home looked so inviting as on that morning when I caught sight of the familiar gables and turrets, for it was an ancient Gothic building that had long been in our family. Everything about the spot seemed as restful as ever.

My brother, always an early riser, was about and greeted me with every show of pleasure and affection, though he quite scoffed at the idea of any danger to him from the party of outlaws. As I proceeded in confidence to tell him of my other experiences, his face assumed

a thoughtful look, and when I had concluded he turned to me and placing his hand on my shoulder, said, "Joscelyn, I pray thou hast not made some terrible mistake, but methinks thou hast been played upon and I greatly fear the result."

He voiced almost the same dread that was beginning to arise in my own mind. Yet, he could not at all explain the mystery about Dorothy, and seemed as puzzled as myself.

No one came to attack us, but late that afternoon came one of our servants with the news that Colonel Lawley's troops had been surprised by a rabble in going through the Forest of Dean. There, though Lawley and two other officers had been killed, not a common soldier had been hurt, and under command of Colonel Brett, the Royalists had continued their march towards the River Severn.

At this news, showing clearly that Lord Raglan's despatches had never reached Colonel Lawley, Anthony said that the only thing for me to do was to hurry back and tell Lord

Herbert the whole affair and abide by the consequences. To assure me of his own safety he promised to prepare for an attack, though he smiled at the idea of such an attempt.

With one John Ramsey, one of the tenants, to accompany me, I started on the ride to Raglan Castle, in far different spirits than on my first trip.

We followed the same circuitous route as before, but scarcely had we gone many miles, when I saw the glint of steel ahead. Too late we tried to seek cover. We were seen and pursued by four mounted troopers, whom I saw at once were followers of Sir William Waller or Fairfax.

Seeing all escape to be impossible, I turned my horse, resolving not to be taken without a struggle. I made a cruel thrust with my sword at the nearest opponent and felt a fierce joy as I saw him fall, but the next instant came a blinding flash and report, and with a wound in my neck I sank to the ground.

When I regained consciousness I found that I was bound and gagged and lying in a loft,

in which some hay was piled in one corner. Where was John, my companion, I knew not.

My neck was bandaged, as I found was also my arm, and with pain and fatigue I lay quite still, though inwardly fretting at my confinement.

Presently the trap-door was pulled aside, quietly and stealthily, and there, in the darkness, I could make out faithful John, standing with a finger on his lips, by way of caution. Behind him stood a second figure which I could not make out. In an instant John had cut my bonds, and taking off my boots bade me follow him, which, though weak and dizzy, I managed to do.

Down the creaking ladder we went, each sound seeming to be so magnified that every second we listened for fear of surprise. Then out across the grass, to a farmhouse, where going to a window, to which John pointed, I saw within the figures of the three sleeping troopers who had attacked and routed us.

A touch on my arm made me start, and half turning I saw the figure who had accom-

panied John. Stretching out one arm and placing a hand over my mouth, with the other arm the figure threw back the hooded cloak and revealed to me the face—of Dorothy !

Mingled feelings of love and anger, doubt and suspense filled my heart, but this was no time for indulging in such. With a gesture she bade me follow her and in a moment we were in a lane some little distance from the house, where John was holding two horses.

“False one, to whom didst thou deliver the packet?” I burst out in an angry whisper, unable longer to contain myself, but Dorothy glancing fearfully towards the farmhouse, answered not, but motioned us to take our horses as she said : “Go, take the road to thy left and ride for thy life! Make haste! Quick !”

We mounted, and as we rode off, hardly stopping to utter a word of thanks, I fancied as I took a last glance at the pale face of her for whom in my heart love and suspicion struggled for the mastery, that in her eyes were tears, which she in vain tried to force back.

As we came to the turn of the road, once again I looked towards her and even in the dark I thought that I made out her figure, this time stretched on the ground, in an attitude suggestive of the greatest grief or despair. For a second I hesitated, whether or not to go back, but an indistinct sound from the farmhouse, and a word of warning from John, turned me from such an idea and away we galloped into the gloom of the night.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW I SAW THE KING AND TOLD MY STORY.



AS we hurriedly rode along in the darkness, keeping a careful lookout ahead so as not again to be surprised, John, in a low tone, recounted what had happened :

On seeing me fall, and perceiving that there was no way of escape for us, he had surrendered and had helped raise me and bandage my wound. Then the troopers had swung themselves on their horses, and, bidding John take my unconscious form before him, had ridden a few miles until they reached the farmhouse, at which I had seen Dorothy the second time.

There I had been bound and placed in the barn. John, however, cunning knave that he was, had feigned to have been pleased at my discomfiture, and had been permitted to join them in their merrymaking, closely watched nevertheless. In the carouse that followed, he had drunk the health of Cromwell and the

Parliamentarians, and having been pronounced by the troopers a rare good fellow, was bidden by them to join their force, which he, honest varlet that he was, agreed to consider. (John chuckled quietly as he related this part of his story.)

Well drunken, the troopers had fallen into a heavy slumber, forgetting to bind John, who, when all was quiet, had been about to leave, when the door was softly opened and Dorothy, half concealed in its shadow, had whispered him to follow her. When safely outside, she had told him that the old couple, as well as the troopers, were deep in slumber, and that then was the time to escape. With John, she had helped to saddle two of the horses in the stable, and had fastened them in the lane where we had found them.

Then she had returned with him to the loft where I had been left bound. What followed is already known.

When John had finished his story, we rode on in silence. I was more perplexed than ever. What meant this strange sojourn of Mistress

Dorothy, the daughter of a knight, in that lowly farmhouse? How inexplicable her fickle conduct towards one in the King's service! What did it bode these letters of hers, saving me from peril, yet stealing my packet? Already I was allowing my suspicions to gain ground. Already did I believe her obtaining these despatches to Colonel Lawley to be part of a plot of our enemies.

As I bethought myself of the surrender of these despatches, I felt in my doublet for the letters I had received from Dorothy. They were gone! The discovery caused me to utter a cry, and immediately John rode up to my side, and anxiously inquired as to what ailed me. It would not do to tell him of such a matter, so I put him off by saying that I thought I had seen the glint of steel ahead of us, and suspected an ambuscade, though now I saw that I was mistaken.

All that night we rode, and when the sun was well up in the heavens on the following morning, I reached Raglan, in doleful guise, wearied, wounded, and sick of heart, for I now

had no warrant for what I had done, or evidence to support my story.

There seemed to be an unusual stir about the castle, and at the entrance the guard had been doubled. Not at first recognizing me they were about to detain me and send for an officer. Making myself known, however, I was cordially welcomed and in answer to my query as to why the castle seemed so much alive, I was apprised that the King was there on a visit.

The King at Raglan! How my heart throbbed with expectation, for I had always deeply longed to see Charles, now of most blessed memory. I sent word to the Marquis to tell him of my arrival, for I found that Lord Herbert had gone to Oxford; but several hours passed before I was admitted to his presence.

He was walking up and down one of the galleries forming an ante-chamber to the suite of apartments called the state-rooms, and I could not but notice the beauty of the groined ceiling, the richly carven fireplace and the walls hung with rare portraits and suits of armour.

Seated at a small table, perusing some papers, probably state documents, was a figure clad in black velvet, wearing the insignia of the Garter and several other decorations. In an instant I realized that it was the King, and I bowed to the ground. He turned to me with a sweet smile, which somehow seemed to accentuate the sad, thoughtful expression his face ever wore, and with an exquisite grace and dignity, that I have never seen equalled in any one else, said to the Marquis: "My Lord, do we see Joscelyn Vernon?"

"Truly, 'tis he, may it please your Majesty," replied the Marquis. "And he hath doubtless come to report why he failed to reach Colonel Lawley in time to prevent that which my son feared."

The Marquis turned a rather hard, searching look upon me, but the King still continued his smiling scrutiny.

At his command I told my story as best I could, though it was with sadly blushing face that I related the portions of it in which Dorothy figured. At its conclusion his Majesty

looked grave and the Marquis incredulous. When the latter demanded the evidence in the shape of the letters that I claimed Dorothy had sent me, and I replied that they had been stolen from me, the Marquis lost his temper and burst out, "Are we never to be rid of traitors? God knows we have enough of them, yet methought a Vernon would prove true!"

"And a Vernon *has* proved true, my Lord," I broke in. "Before God and in the presence of our most gracious King, I swear it."

Here the King interrupted with the question as to whether Mistress Dorothy, who was still at the Castle, could not be called to corroborate my story, or prove it false.

"Yes, Sire," responded the Marquis; "but it is a sorry business to summon a gentle maiden to answer to a charge that is well nigh traitorous, and methinks our friend yonder would fain not see her."

"Nay, indeed, I beg of your Majesty to call her," said I, resolved to see the meaning of this mystery.

A page was sent to call the Lady Dorothy, and the moments seemed to be hours ere in company with one of her attendants she appeared, and the page announced, "The Lady Dorothy Arden."

In utter amaze, I stood rooted to the spot. Here was the Lady Dorothy, yet here was not my Dorothy! A wondrous resemblance was there, it is true, in eyes and hair and colouring, even in the lines of the slender figure, yet though it seemed to deepen the mystery that lingered about her, this stately maiden was not the one I knew as Dorothy.

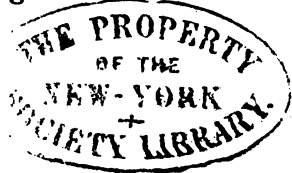
The resemblance might well bewilder me. But stranger than this was the knowledge that came to me. Here was a mystery, yet here, too, was some light upon it. The lady before me I now recognized without a doubt as she who had been pointed out to me, as she ascended the staircase on the night of my arrival at the Castle, as Sir Gerald Arden's daughter. This was certain. Who, then, was the Dorothy I had rescued in the woods, my maiden of the white scarf, whom then I

had taken for the same Lady Dorothy whom I had seen so frequently since, yet who now, face to face with the true Lady Dorothy, I found was some one else? Never was I so bewildered.

All eyes were turned to me, but so completely mystified was I, that all I could utter was, "Your Majesty, this is not she whom I know as Lady Dorothy."

"I thought so," exclaimed the Marquis, his ire again rising. Forgetting the presence of the King he strode up and down the apartment, while poor Lady Dorothy, as bewildered as myself, looked from one to the other. At a word from the King she left, whereupon the Marquis burst out, "Craving your forgiveness, your Majesty, shall I hang on my highest battlement this traitor, this liar, this knave?"

"Stay, Sir," and my eyes flashed fire, while my tongue could scarcely form the words, for fierce rage and despair: "I am as honourable as thou, my Lord, and if 'twere not that a simple country gentleman like myself cannot call one of thy noble birth to account, I would make thee bitterly pay for calling a Vernon a



traitor, a liar, or a knave. My family have ever faithfully served the King, and even I have done my part, as this limp arm and this sorry wound in my head well show."

Ashamed to show the tremor that was coming into my voice and the tears that I could hardly keep back, for my wounds and fatigue and the bitter injustice of it all had rendered me weak, I turned away, yet not before it had been seen by the King, who, ever sympathetic with those in trouble, for his own life was filled with little else, raised his hand to the Marquis, stopping any reply, as he said: "Pardon me, my Lord, there is surely some mystery here, for I would fain believe Master Joscelyn is a faithful adherent of our right. Remember the old saying:

"A King can kill, a King can save,
A King can make a Lord a Knave
And of a Knave a Lord also,"

and let it be our pleasure to give our young soldier another chance, not only to retrieve himself of thy charge of being a knave, but

if possible win from our hand a better title to our regard."

Even the fiery old Marquis was subdued by these gracious words, and acquiesced in his Sovereign's will. With the command to try and find out the real Dorothy and the hint that there was plenty of work yet to do for the King, by which I might retrieve myself, he bade me depart, and the interview was at an end. I bowed myself from the presence, crestfallen and despondent. Soon, however, events occurred which drove away my despondency and later on resulted in a strange discovery.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW WE LOST THE BATTLE OF NASEBY AND ESCAPED FROM RAGLAN.

THE King's visit lasted many days. It was rumoured that the Marquis, who was a Romanist, was using every effort to turn Charles to that faith, as a return for the vast sums of money that he had loaned his Majesty. There is good reason, however, to doubt this, for the Marquis was ever a most loyal and patriotic subject, and never stooped to bargain for a reward for anything that he did for the King, while the saintly Charles never for a moment swerved from his loyalty and adherence to our ancient Anglo-Catholic Church, planted in "Merrie England" long ere Augustine, the emissary of the Pope, came to found his mission.

I often saw the King as he passed in and out of the Castle, and sometimes he favoured me with a smile. His armies of late had

been meeting with little but reverses. The troops that had been raised by the Marquis of Worcester and Lord Herbert of Raglan, had been defeated and disbanded by Sir William Waller. Worcester had also fallen, and, as one piece of bad news was quickly followed by another, it seemed to me that the King's face became more and more sad, as if already he began to realize the hopelessness of the Royal cause, and saw as in a vision his martyr death. At last, however, it was resolved to march to Oxford and join the main army there. In the train of the King I started out and soon saw the towers and spires of this great seat of learning.

As we galloped into Oxford my spirit was fired with enthusiasm at the sight of the old city and the many gallant soldiers who filled the streets. Everyone seemed in fine feather and an air of hopefulness pervaded all, quite in contrast to Raglan, where so many shook their heads dolefully at the reverses that had lately happened to the Royal arms.

There was talk of aid from France, while

much reliance was placed in the Scotch troops, which, under the Duke of Hamilton, had crossed the border. Even the King, in happy frame of mind, wrote to the Queen that "his affairs were never in so fair and hopeful a way." Alas! His sun was already setting!

What few friends I had, greeted me with great show of joy. My Lord Herbert had a long talk with me and managed to obtain for me an interview with the King, who commissioned me to a place near his own person.

The great University town charmed me. Its winding streets, its glittering shops, its dignified colleges, which, being ecclesiastical foundations, had a very churchly appearance, all impressed my mind, unused to the glories of the town, as being inspiring in the extreme.

Not long, however, did we stay there. We took the field full of sanguine expectations. Alas, we left it a forlorn hope! It was a goodly array that set out, well-equipped and well-ordered, but unfortunately, as was proven, was composed of troops not yet skilled in the art of war or of undaunted courage.

Never shall I forget that terrible day at Naseby. We went into the battle with every reason to expect victory. We left the field, fleeing before the enemy. Right nobly did the King's horse behave. Again and again we charged, offering an invulnerable front, against which Cromwell's cavalry thundered in vain. Alas! for us, however, the infantry would not stand. Frightened or dispirited, they threw down their arms and cried for quarter, and the battle was lost.

One little body of them, however, did stand firm, and led by one who though tall and strong seemed young in years, rallied again and again to the fight, notwithstanding that each moment saw their ranks thinned more and more.

At last, when the battle was irretrievably lost, and but a handful of this little body was left, at the King's command I spurred my way to where they stood, and while my troopers held the place for a moment I gave the King's order for them to retreat.

Covered with wounds, the leader scarce

could stand, but in that brave form I recognized my brother Anthony, whom I had thought at our home near Tinterne, my dear twin brother, who now seemed truly a warrior-priest ! A clasp of the hand was all, and the next moment, with him across my saddle, I was galloping for life after the King's cavalry, now in full retreat.

On joining them, we managed to obtain another horse, and as Anthony was still able to ride, he mounted. With Cromwell's troopers following close at our rear, we rode, as none but those fleeing for life can ride. Over hill and dale the horses thundered. Shots whistled past us, breaths came in hurried gasps, hearts beat as if to burst their bounds, but at last, ere we rested our spent steeds, we saw the King safe in Leicester, and on thence through Worcestershire to Hereford.

With but a small troop of horse, in which it was the good fortune of Anthony and myself to be numbered, the King proceeded by way of Abergavenny to Raglan Castle, where he purposed staying to see if the promises of

fresh troops from those parts could be made good. Though a defeated monarch, he was everywhere greeted with marks of loyalty and affection, and though dejected of mien and sick at heart, was much comforted by the conduct of these staunch Royalists of South Wales.

As he again entered Raglan, the aged Marquis met him and kneeling down to the ground, greeted him with a marked compliment. The King replied, "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel," being quickly answered by the Marquis, ever thinking of his Roman views : "I hope your Majesty will be a Defender of *the* Faith." It is needless to say that King Charles never wavered in his adherence to the purer Church of England.

Thus came the King a last time to Raglan Castle, perhaps the last happy period of his sad life !

It seemed strange to me, how after such a disastrous battle as he had just seen, that he should care to indulge in the sports and ceremonies with which he whiled away weeks at

Raglan during this visit. In hunting and receiving those who vied in making his time pass pleasantly the days flew, our monarch in such pursuits trying to forget his ill-fortune, while we, his soldiers, fretted and fumed for a chance of another bout with the enemy.

I cannot forbear relating one instance of loyalty to the King such as is rarely seen. One day while the King was standing with the Governor at the entrance of the Castle, a neighboring clergyman, one Thomas Swift,* was brought to the Governor, who asked him how he could serve him. He replied that he came only to offer to the King his coat! Laughing, the Governor said that this could scarcely be worth much. "Take my waistcoat also!" said Mr. Swift.

He left, and the Governor as a right merry jest presented the King with these articles. What was the astonishment of every one present, when in these articles of clothing were found three hundred gold pieces, in order to give which to the King, this loyal priest had

* The grandfather of the well-known Dean Swift.

mortgaged his estate. It is seldom that we see in this vain world such an instance of unselfish love !

While at Raglan I had well-nigh engaged in a duel. Once, when lounging in the courtyard, a young spark came up to me and taunted me with dreaming of "the fair maiden who played thee foul with my Lord's packet at Tinterne." Not reflecting that he knew nothing of the truth, and seeing only the insult to Dorothy, I drew my rapier, and calling him to guard himself, would doubtless have run him through if it had not been for Anthony, who springing forward struck up my blade, receiving at the same time a slight wound over the eye. As at the time when, months before, I had hit him, he showed never a sign of anger, but, binding up his own wound, soothed my ruffled feelings and forced my opponent to crave my pardon.

At last fatal news reached us that Fairfax had taken Leicester and had defeated our troops at Lamport. This was sad enough, but sadder was to come, for in September the word

was brought that Prince Rupert had surrendered Bristol.

Poor King Charles ! Ever trusting and ever deceived ! Even Prince Rupert, whom he had ever treated with the greatest regard and indulgence, proved unworthy ! His was a base surrender !

His Majesty at once prepared to leave, for Raglan would now be no safe refuge for him.

Thinking it would be wiser to travel incognito with but few followers, he took with him but a small band, to our great joy selecting, among others, Anthony and myself.

"Be prepared, however, for hardship and peril, for I will now be a heavy burden," he said to us with a sad smile. With tears in our eyes we assured him that there were no better joy than to die for him.

Our experiences were more like those of humble pilgrims than of a royal party. We were glad to lodge wherever we felt assured of protection and aid. Alas ! Sometimes in our narrow escapes and hurried retreats, the poor harried King had to march without food !

I, for a great part of the time, directed the journey, as I was very familiar with the country. As we neared the Severn I told Anthony to go on in advance and secure a boat for our passage. It was fortunate for us that I did so, for suddenly a large party of Roundheads came upon us and hotly followed. On we spurred, urging our horses to their utmost speed. The King suffered greatly on this rapid ride, but he never failed us.

Scarcely had we reached the Severn, where Anthony and some fishermen met us with a boat at Charleston Rock, and started on our passage ere the Roundheads galloped to the bank.

There were a few other fishing boats drawn up on the shore, and we surely would have been taken if it had not been for Anthony, for with sword in hand the Roundheads forced the fishermen to launch these boats in pursuit.

At Anthony's command his boatman, a leal, faithful fellow, shouted in Welsh to his comrades, all of whom were staunch Royalists, my brother's order, and Anthony impersonating the person of the King, directed his men to

row towards a reef in the river. At the same time he shouted to us so that all could hear, "Adieu, Messieurs! Meet me at the landing above. Remember your King."

Darkness favoured his plan, and as his boat, which was the lightest, seemed to make the distance faster, our pursuers thought that in it must be the King and so directed all their efforts to overtake it.


In the meantime we made good our escape, and when we reached the other shore and looked back, we saw all of the Roundheads landed on the reef called the English Stones. The fishermen, at Anthony's suggestion, had refused to proceed further, saying that it was as far as they could go, assuring the Roundheads that they could easily wade across the gap to the Gloucester shore.

There stood the discomfited troopers, who found at high tide that it was impossible to cross the gap, while Anthony and the fishermen, thus escaping, were rowing fast after us.

Leaving him to overtake us we pushed on, and in a short time had seen our King safe with some of his trusted troops.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW I WAS TAKEN PRISONER AND MET CROMWELL.

S we made our way back to Raglan, all of us had happy reminders of Charles's goodness, I being no longer simple Master Vernon, but now Sir Joscelyn Vernon, of Vernon Hall, and Colonel of the King's troops. Even in his hour of defeat our good monarch thus honoured me, his humble follower.

When Anthony rejoined us I bade him proceed to Raglan with our small band, and with but two companions I turned aside to visit our old home, with a strange longing that some happy stroke of fortune would give me a glimpse of fair Mistress Dorothy, for though I was still angry at her for having deceived me and robbed me of the packet, I was more than anxious to probe the mystery of it all.

Scarcely, however, had Anthony and his

band gotten well out of sight than we suddenly came upon a large body of the enemy's horse. In an instant we were surrounded, hardly a chance being granted for resistance, if it had been possible against such an overwhelming force, and with a sad heart I found myself a prisoner of Cromwell's soldiers, who started off at a rapid trot towards the east.

By rapid marches we made our way to London where Cromwell was, and even in my fear of the fate that I deemed awaited me, I could not but gaze in wonder at this great city, the capital of the country, the scene of many stirring events in history, and now soon to be the place of the murderous execution of a martyr-king.

On the following morning I was taken into the presence of Oliver Cromwell, the great leader of the King's enemies, in whom before long I was to see the iron ruler of the land.

A more unprepossessing personage I have never seen, nor one whose very manner seemed to partake of the combined nature of a tiger and a cat. Of medium stature, he was coarsely

though strongly made. Harsh, severe features gave his face a hardened look, rendered still more so by piercing gray eyes that seemed to read one's very soul, and appeared capable of showing a relentless hate ; while to complete the whole, a nose out of all proportion, even to his large face, shone out red as blood.

This was he who ruled his armies as few could rule them, and who, a wonderful mixture of fanaticism and hypocrisy, of determination and ability, was to mould England for some years to come and leave his lasting impress on the world's history.

"Thou art a bold companion of the King," he began in a cold, hard voice, whilst he watched me as never yet did any man, "to hazard thy life in a falling cause. If I mistake not, thou didst aid him in his journey from Raglan."

"And right glad to help his Majesty even in this little way," answered I, determined to keep a bold front.

"Ha ! Sayest thou so ? Dost know that I can cause thee to hang higher than yonder sparrow flies ?" rejoined Cromwell.

"Ay, and if thou didst, my death 't would naught avail thee," I replied, for I well knew that my case was wellnigh desperate.

"Thou hast a brave tongue in thy head, young sir," said Cromwell, again turning his piercing gaze upon me. "Yet I fear thou dost still hunger after the flesh-pots of Egypt and not after the manna from heaven that cometh to the hungry soul. Truly as Israel had to smite the Hittites, the Amalekites and the Amorites, so the armies of the Lord yet have to fight for His truth."

The great leader ceased his cant, and meditated a moment.

Suddenly he arose and paced the room, while a fierce frown gathered on his face. I watched him with a feeling of awe.

"Jailbird! Gallows! Ravening Crows! Fiends of Hell! How will the Parliament rave! The Council of State fume! Yet, methinks neither care for him who has really made them!" Then pausing in front of me he continued, though in a calmer voice, "Thou doubtless callest me Noll and likenest me to

the devil. Yet I fain would do thee a service, though thou art but a worshipper of idols, a follower of Baal, and methinks I like none but good haters of Prince, Prelacy and Prayer Book. So instead of handing thee now to the gallows, I will give thee into safekeeping as a prisoner of war until we decide upon thy fate. Ho! Markam, bring me pen and ink."

Then, in a hand that shook with mingled inward rage, fanatical bigotry and sudden magnanimity, he penned an order, and ringing a bell, without another word, handed out the paper and motioned him who responded to the bell to take me away. I was led away, and for the nonce placed in a well-guarded tent.

The day wore on and my spirits sank with the sun. A prisoner with the doom of death probably hanging over my head, to die like any common knave! Career cut short, with never a chance to clear a name clouded by the ill-success of my trip to Tinterne! And with the thoughts of death and the failure of all my efforts came thoughts of Dorothy. Strange how even in this sad hour, perhaps near my

last, the memory of her should intrude itself. Did I love this mysterious woman who had wellnigh undone me? Alas! I knew not. I only knew that her presence, as it were, was lighting the gloom of my tent.

Suddenly I felt the side of the tent gently tapped. I straightened myself. A low voice whispered "Joscelyn." Was I dreaming? Was I in some strange trance? Surely it was the well-known voice of Dorothy! But how came she there, amid the soldiers of Cromwell? No, I was dreaming.

Again I heard the voice, "Joscelyn, dost thou know Dorothy's voice?"

Then the back of the tent was softly pulled aside. Dorothy wrapt in a long military cloak stood there. It was no dream. She who was there, outlined even in the darkness, was so close that I plainly made out every line of her face. Quickly she glanced behind her; then bending forward she whispered: "Not a word, but follow me. Thy life depends on it. Fold this about thee." She handed me a long cloak she drew from beneath hers.

Quickly wrapping it about me, I followed her to the rear of the tent. The guard was sitting sleepily a few yards in front, unconscious of the fact that we were quietly leaving the tent by an opening in the back. For a second I thought our act folly, as scarcely a stone's throw off I saw large squads of soldiers lying on the ground, showing in the light of their camp-fires. We, however, were in the shadow and could not be seen.

"Courage," whispered my mysterious companion. "Follow me with never a word. We must pass the lines boldly." Straightway she led me swiftly by the soldiers, who glanced up as the sentry stopped us. Whispering something to him, and showing him a paper of some kind, he started and allowed us to pass, glancing curiously at me. In the same way we passed the various lines, Dorothy marching as a veteran trooper before me.

At last we were beyond the last of the lines, and again in the darkness. Dorothy heaved a sigh, and looking towards her I noticed that she seemed white and trembling. "Master

Joscelyn," she began, and in her old formal way, "I must leave thee here. Here is a pass signed by Cromwell. Ask me not to explain, but go ; and, if thou canst, think better than thou dost now of her who has braved much for thee to-night. Farewell."

As I stood like any clown, staring with gaping mouth, for I was as if in a dream, she walked quickly towards the enemy's lines and disappeared in the darkness.

For a moment I stood irresolute ; then with a quick step went towards the west. Two days afterwards I saw the towers of Winchester in the distance, and feeling safe with my pass, wended my way there to refresh myself at an inn, a famous one well-known to me, being but a short space beyond the Cathedral close. Alas ! I would that never had I gone there !

As I drew near the Cathedral I noticed a great crowd about that venerable and holy place, and out of curiosity I joined it. Borne on by the press, I was soon within that massive pile, but would fain never have witnessed the sight that met my eyes.

There in that lovely building, erected to the service of Almighty God, endeared by the associations of centuries and hallowed by the worship of ages, in that pile, whose vaulted heights, soaring arches and columned aisles had oft witnessed crowds of adoring worshippers and had resounded with the praises of God, those sacrilegious troopers had quartered some of their horses. Now, in hypocritical fanaticism, while canting God's words, they still further profaned His sanctuary by running round and round that sacred building, ever leaving in their train naught but ruin.

Some pulled apart the organ pipes and went blowing them about the church ; others with lumps of coal marked with black streaks the Bibles and Prayer Books, disfiguring and destroying them. A third party with hammers broke to pieces richly carved stalls and rood-screen, priceless marble tombs and monuments, while still others smashed the stained glass of the windows, that for ages had glowed with the pictured representations of holy and religious scenes and characters.

But worse was still to follow. Tired of these things, they dragged the high altar to the centre of the church and on it piled their hats and helmets, and having secured the rich vestments from the sacristy and robing rooms, they tore them to pieces. Chalices, patens and other sacred vessels were profaned and put to unholy uses. Even the tombs were rifled, and the bones of those who had there slept for ages were thrown to the winds or scattered about the church.

Ah ! It was a terrible sight, yet one of constant occurrence where the Roundheads had possessed themselves of Cathedral towns.

And all the while there arose above the din and babel, the puling voices of those who with upraised eyes and drawn faces cried, "Down with Popery, the Scarlet Woman and Prelacy. 'He hath put down the mighty from their seat !' 'God will aid the sword of the Lord and of Gideon !' 'Ye give tithe of mint and anise' and eat fish on Fridays, but verily ye are given unto chambering and wantonness ! Make war on the Amalekites !

Gird on the sword ! Damn it all ! Down with the works of Belial ! Lay the Scarlet Woman of Babylon lower than the depths of hell !”

Encouraged by such furious, half-crazed jargon, the evil work proceeded.

It were foolish for me to raise my single hand to stop it, but ere I left that mighty pile, majestic even amid the sad havoc that was being wrought, I thanked my God that I was no such canting hypocrite as those within, but was an earnest believer in the holy mother Church of England, our heritage from Apostolic ages, neither Protestant nor Roman, but pure in primitive catholicity and practice.

Truly it were hard to see how a true lover of God could profane and desecrate the works reared to His Glory !

I left the Cathedral, but long did this terrible scene linger in my mind, haunting me in my dreams and arousing in me the wildest indignation.

Yet it was fortunate for me that I raised not my voice against it, for I doubt not that

even Cromwell's passport would not have saved me from the wrath of that wild, crazy mob.

I made my way out of the Cathedral, and, disregarding all feelings of hunger and fatigue, hastened to leave the town so desecrated by these fanatical soldiers.

That night I slept at Wells, and ere many days I saw once more, showing above the trees, the massive donjon keep of Raglan Castle.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW WE HAD A SURPRISE AT RAGLAN.

BRIGHT glad was I to be back at Raglan Castle, for after the disastrous battle of Naseby and the sad flight of the King, it was very comforting to be with those who were still loyal and loving adherents of Charles's fortunes.

The Marquis welcomed me right royally and seemed much pleased at my new honours, oft taking occasion to predict for me further reward when Charles should conquer his enemies and once more restore the land to allegiance to him.

Alas! None of us foresaw the dreadful blot upon our nation's history that so soon was to occur.

It was not long after this that a strange event happened, and one that showed both the ignorance and the effrontery of the evil element in the neighborhood of Raglan, now

emboldened by the defeat of the King's arms.

One evening I sought my room but found it impossible to sleep. A strange sense of impending danger seized me. In vain I reflected that the horrors of war had long since ceased about Raglan, and that even in case of surprise, which was hardly to be thought of, we were well able to defend this mighty fortress. No philosophy availed me. I could not shake off the feeling, and at last, finding it impossible to sleep, I arose and made my way to the battlemented walls.

It was a moonlight night, but clouds were rapidly passing in the heavens, causing a continual change from light to darkness, and darkness to light.

All of the lights had long been extinguished. The Castle slept. A spirit of peace and restfulness seemed to reign. Even the guard seemed napping, and save for the mournful sighing of the wind, not a sound disturbed the solemn stillness of the night.

I proceeded slowly along the esplanade,

along the top of the walls until I had gained the corner facing the grim-looking Keep. There I paused, and leaning on the rampart gazed meditatively at the waters of the moat lying black and dark at my feet many yards below, and at the sombre shades of the forest, then extending to within a short distance of the walls.

Never to me had a night seemed more oppressive. Never had the repose that reigned over all impressed me with greater loneliness. And with it all came back a renewed sense of coming danger, now heightened by the discovery that the guards were all asleep. Yet so ungrounded were my fears, and so averse was I to bring ridicule upon myself, that I was about to withdraw, after first arousing the guard, as a matter of duty, when my attention was attracted by a faint yet confused murmur that seemed to come from the forest.

With every faculty at tension, I listened, with beating heart, for, strange to say, although now used to danger and the field of battle, the quiet of the night had somewhat unnerved me.

Just then the moon, which had for the past few moments been hidden by the passing clouds, came forth in all her glory.

Instantly I fancied that I saw the glint of steel and the sparkle of weapons at the edge of the forest. At the same time I saw gliding figures like spectral forms hastening towards the point nearest the gate.

More quickly than I can relate it, I noticed that these persons, whoever they might be, were not the regular Parliamentary troops, and I devised a bold plan. It was but the work of an instant to apprise the guard, and to communicate to them my scheme. In a few moments all was ready, and though certain of the success of my plan, I was very glad to see the dawn brightening the east.

From a loophole I saw the figures outside, now massed together, rapidly but stealthily approaching the castle gate, whose portcullis was raised, though the doors were barred.

When almost at the spot I gave a signal, and suddenly the gates were flung wide open and there, revealed to the terrified and aston-

ished gaze of our enemies, was a solid mass of the King's troopers, armed and ready.

"Stay ! or we fire ;" shouted I, as the surprisers turned to flee. Irresolutely they paused, and then like a pack of beaten curs sullenly stood where they were.

A motley rabble, composed of the worst element about the Wye, they had assembled to surprise Raglan, never in their ignorance realizing the large garrison within, but thinking it an easy matter to overpower the sleeping guard and then loot the place.

The Marquis of Worcester now appearing, their leader had the effrontery to tell him that being a recusant (a Romanist) he should deliver up the arms of the Castle for the public weal.

Contrary to my expectation the Marquis seemed to treat the demand as a joke, and in a kind way spoke to the varlets, advising them of their folly. Then, after conferring with a few of his attendants, he invited some of them into the Castle, determining in an unique way to punish them.

Raglan then possessed a series of artificial water-works such as never at that time had been rivalled in "Merrie England." Fountains and cataracts were there ingeniously contrived to start instantly upon quantities of water being conveyed to the top of the tower of the Keep and allowed to flow down.

Taking these outlaws, therefore, to that part of the moat over which a bridge led to the massive Keep, the Marquis made them pause. At a signal the water-works were started.

Never shall I forget the sight as witnessed from the walls of the Castle, where the ladies and a few of the officers had retired to see the sport. Roaring, splashing, foaming, the cataracts and fountains burst into life. Completely surrounded by this wondrous circle of roaring water, the like of which they had never seen; deafened and confused by the loud noise, yet hardly knowing what had caused it, the poor fellows stood like ones amazed, terrified out of their senses, and fancying that the full powers of hell in a new guise had been let loose upon them.

Still further to complete their discomfiture, the Marquis had contrived a second act, and now, in pursuance of such orders, one of my Lord's retainers came rushing forward, crying: "Look to yourselves, my masters; look to yourselves; for by our Lady the lions have all broken loose!"

In wild frenzy and terror the rustics fled from the place, followed by their comrades who had awaited them at the gate, and never did they pause until a goodly mile interposed its distance between them and the Castle that they had wished to surprise.

It was a lesson for them, and I grieved not at their fright, for the varlets well deserved the treatment which they received; far too good for them, think I.

My fear of danger had ended in a jovial jest, yet it was almost the last sport of its kind that the noble old Castle witnessed, for already were its days numbered.

I have now to record a very strange event, the fulfilment of a prophecy. I am not wont to believe in supernatural occurrences, and I

fain would answer all theories by the statement that everything happens through the will of God, but ever and anon strange things do occur that seem to be unaccountable.

The Marquis had often heard the prophecy that Raglan should fall when a cloud of bats should overshadow it. It was one of many predictions, and yet on account of its apparent improbability more than the usual trust had been placed in it.

A few days after the strange visit of the outlaws, or ill-meaning rustics, I was lounging in the courtyard, when a heavy cloud seemed to pass between us and the sun, whilst at the same time came a swishing, rushing sound that made all look upward. There to our astonishment was a perfect cloud of bats. We shot at them, but few were hit.

The Marquis came rushing out and saw with a troubled face the first part of the prophecy. That very afternoon the Castle was laid siege to by Colonel Morgan and about fifteen hundred men from Worcester. Our garrison amounted to about eight hundred, and

confident in the strength of the Castle we felt no fear of the result, except, perhaps, a few of the more superstitious, who saw in the flight of the bats and the approach of the enemy the realization of that terrible prediction. But a far more crushing blow for me than the fall of Raglan was impending. For some days after that, I had been attending to guard duty for several nights, and wearied and worn had retired one evening for a short period of rest. It was during this time that we made one of the numerous sallies from the Castle. Of late we had frequently essayed these, and our men had behaved right gallantly in them, gaining some little success.

This day, led by Anthony, the attempt was made to dislodge some marksmen from a place of vantage, as their shots were rendering certain portions of the Castle exceedingly dangerous.

Now used to war, I thought nothing of any danger from this sally, but peacefully settled myself to snatch a moment's sleep.

Suddenly in my slumbers I fancied that I

heard a voice call "Joscelyn ! Joscelyn !" and I seemed to see a struggling mass of men. I heard the rush of galloping troops and the noise of rapid shots and groans. Then out of the silence that followed came the voice again, "Joscelyn ! Joscelyn !" and I saw a form rise, stagger, and fall in a pool of blood. Then it seemed as if galloping horses came upon him, crushing, grinding the life out under the heavy hoofs, and he writhed and struggled and fought, but to no avail. Once again the voice sounded "Joscelyn ! Joscelyn ! Rouse thyself, lad, for Anthony needs thee." And I awoke to find, shaking me by the arm, my brother.

With a glad cry I sprang up, for my dream had made me dread some evil to him, but as I did so, with a low groan he fell prostrate over me, while the hot blood from many a ghastly wound flowed upon me.

CHAPTER X.

HOW I LOST ANTHONY.

AS I write this part of the story of my life all of the grief and horror of that night vividly come back to me. Life is filled with sorrow, and trouble and misfortune come to all, yet I doubt if many an one in a few short hours has seen one who, next to her who is dearest, has been most deeply loved, start out in the bloom of health to return to gasp out his life in agony and pain.

Anthony had been mortally wounded. Heading the sally, his horse had fallen, and ere it could be prevented the troopers following had galloped over his prostrate form. They had borne him back to the Castle, where he had insisted on entering my room alone.

As he lay with pale face and closed eyes on my pallet, where the doctor had just left him, with no hope of recovery, I knelt by his side

watching for the slightest sign of consciousness.

A torch in a bracket over the door cast fitful gleams of light upon his face, and chased the shadows about the wall, making them seem like a long procession of dancing spectres. Alone, no sound but the fevered breathing of Anthony was heard. Even the cannonading outside had ceased.

Crushed and maimed he lay there, his body one mass of frightful wounds, yet, bound with blood-stained bandages as he was, it seemed to me that his face was transfigured, and now at the moment of death showed forth the beauty of soul that was his during life. Even so must Christ's Face on the Cross have seemed on the day of the Crucifixion.

The world with its honours faded away. No dreams of glory now pervaded me. No thought of success longer lured me. All, all was merged in the agony, the grief I experienced, as, kneeling by him who had long been my dearest companion, I prayed as never I prayed before that at least he might speak to me ere grim death claimed him for his own.

A slight quiver of the eyelids, a faint pressure of the hand, and with a beautiful smile as of yore, his eyes opened and met mine. At first so low was his voice as he essayed to speak, that it was only by bending low over him that I could make out the words.

"Joscelyn, thou hast ever been a good brother to me," came in faint, gasping whispers. "And I fain would hope that thou mayst ever love me, lad, for none other earthly comfort have I."

He paused and seemed to be praying. Then again he began, "Brother, dost love war? Ay, I know thou dost, yet I fain would thou didst not, for it is a vain thing and ill-befitteth the followers of Christ. Ah! Joscelyn, would that as little children we could dwell in brotherly harmony and not with Him on our lips plunge the cruel sword into the hearts of our fellows made in His Image!" A shudder seemed to pass over his frame.

"Joscelyn, nearer, lad, for methinks thou art far off. All seems to be so hazy and clouded." The film of death was already misting his eyes.

"Brother, dost wonder why I kept on in the army? Does it surprise thee, my delay in taking Holy Orders? It is, lad, because I did thee a cruel wrong. I fear to tell thee, Joscelyn, yet fain would I, in this hour of death, unburden my mind of all that weighs it down."

How could he ever have wronged me, he, Anthony, who was both saint and martyr?

"Joscelyn, I loved Dorothy—Oh! draw not back, my brother," for unconsciously I had started and partly arisen, but now in truest contrition drew closer. "Ay, that is it, hold mine hand, for it seemeth to wax cold. I loved Dorothy, lad, long ere thou ever knew her. Ay, I loved her and love her now, but my brother, only in this have I wronged thee. I never revealed my love to her and when I found out that thou wast enamoured of her, I bade her adieu never to see her more and rode to the King to drown my devotion to Dorothy in service for our monarch."

"Why didst not tell me, Anthony?" I burst out.

With a brighter, sweeter smile he looked long

at me, and then continued, "Tell thee, lad, and so wring thine heart between love of Dorothy and duty to me! Nay, Joscelyn, that were not brotherly! That would have brought sorrow where I fain would ever bring joy. Come nearer to me and tell me, lad, thou dost pardon my love for her, for I crave thy forgiveness."

Pardon! What had I to pardon? He, who had sacrificed his dream for me! I the selfish; he the sacrificing. Ah! Never before did I realize his goodness. I began to say this to him, but he stopped me.

"Say no more, Joscelyn, but kiss me, man as thou art, for I fain would have a kiss from thee who hath kissed her. Hark! Is the battle beginning again?"

The cannonade had recommenced, and as I went to the high mullioned window and glanced out a shot struck the point of crossing of the bars, and fell harmless.

"How safe thou art when thou standest behind the Cross! There should one ever stay," murmured Anthony with a smile.

I resumed my kneeling posture at his side, and at a motion from him raised his head in my arms.

“Joscelyn, I seem to see the sorrows that will come upon this our native land. Keep thee, lad, ever leal to thy Church and study the things that pertain to God; for, brother, none other will comfort thee here. . . . Ah! how cold and dark it is getting! Press me closer, dear Joscelyn, for I have none but thee, though thou hast Dorothy! . . . Bless her, Joscelyn, bless her for me, and ever love her as she deserves! Ah! My love, my love, never to be mine! . . . Forgive me, Joscelyn, I forget! Yet pardon me e’en this wrong, for I loved her but in my own heart! . . . Hast thou a crucifix, Joscelyn? Ay, that is it, hold it there,—closer, closer, I seem not to see it! . . . Kiss me again, brother. . . . Mourn not for me. Thou hast Dorothy. . . . Ah! The light is coming! Oh! So beautiful! Pray, Joscelyn, pray.” A few moments of broken prayer and then again I heard Anthony’s words, “Oh! that a priest were here to give

me the comfort of the Blessed Sacrament, that greatest boon in death! . . . See, the light, it is coming bright and beautiful, bright and beautiful. Oh! so beautiful! . . . See it, Joscelyn. . . . Ah! My Redeemer, my dear Lord, accept me. Hold thou the crucifix higher, brother! Come, dear Lord and Saviour, Jesus——”

And with that Holy Name and last prayer on his lips, with a most beautiful smile and look of exaltation on his face, Anthony passed from death into life, as pure a soul as ever walked the darkened paths of the world.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW I MET DOROTHY AGAIN.



ANTHONY was buried in one of the vaults of the Castle, and with a sad heart I rejoined my comrades on the walls. It seemed, however, as if the sally, which had ended so fatally for my poor brother, would prove effective in a measure, for the enemy withdrew some little distance from the Castle, and discontinued the firing. As we found later, they were simply waiting for reinforcements.

It was on the second day after this temporary cessation of hostilities that a note was placed in my hand. I knew instinctively from whom it was. Opening it I read :

“They intend burning Vernon Hall to-night. Ride and save it.
Dorothy.”

Was this a new scheme or plot against me? I inquired as to who had brought this letter, but all that I could ascertain was that the mes-

senger was a young, dark-eyed stripling, who had immediately hastened away, seeming to have no difficulty in getting safely past the enemy.

I resolved at once to act upon my advice, by showing the letter to the Marquis. He read it carefully several times, and then speaking to me more kindly than he had done for a long time, bade me go, taking with me a dozen horsemen of his troop; "and Master Joscelyn," said he, as I turned to leave, "accept an old knight's apology. Thou art true, even if thou wert deceived!"

Grateful to him for his generous admission of his mistake I hurried away, and selecting the six trusty fellows who had accompanied me from home, and picking out six more from the soldiers of the Marquis, in a short time I was riding hard along the road to Vernon Hall. The troopers growled somewhat at the speed, but a few words of explanation from me satisfied them, for already was I generally well liked.

As we neared the place we heard cries of

a conflict, and suddenly the sky ahead of us assumed a blood-red glow, and ever and anon flames of fire darted far up into the air. We pressed on as hard as we could and soon came in view of the house, now, alas, one mass of flames. In front of it stood, or rather danced, a wild-looking set of men, evidently full of delight at their fiendish work.

With a shout we dashed forward, and anger and anxiety urging me on, I drove my spurs furiously into my good horse, as I raced across the close. The ruffians started to flee, but almost to a man were cut down by my troopers.

I had despatched one, and had turned to hasten into the burning house when I saw making for the woods the fellow I had seen at the camp near the Wye, him called Jervis, who, in my hearing on that eventful night, had admitted the murder of my father, and had confessed an insatiable desire of revenge on us for something I knew not of.

I urged my horse after him, and as I did so I was conscious of a slim figure whom I had not before noticed, closely following me.

Caring little for him, whether friend or foe, I jumped from my horse as I saw Jervis enter the brush, and, overtaking him, made him stand his ground.

So fierce was my onslaught that he could not withstand it, and in a moment I had given him a mortal wound, had not an evil mishap befallen me, but, tripping over a root, I stumbled and fell on my knee.

With a look of triumph and revenge on his face Jervis redoubled his efforts. Still fighting, however, with the fury of despair, and sore wounded from the struggle, suddenly I saw appear on my left the young stripling who had followed me. Though blinded by the blood that flowed from a wound in my head, I saw him rush towards me with drawn sword, and fancying that he, too, was hastening to attack me, I turned my blade towards him.

Imagine my horror, when, more quickly than I can tell it, with a furious thrust he gave the ruffian a mortal wound, as at the same time my raised blade pierced his breast, and

with the robber, my rescuer fell prostrate across me.

Ere I fainted from my own wound I felt the hot blood flowing over me, and saw in the pale features of the stripling who had tried to save me, the face of Dorothy, smiling even in her agony, and in vain attempting to articulate words of love.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW I ALMOST TASTED OF DEATH.

HOW long I lay there I know not. When I came to myself, and looked around I was conscious of being in a vaulted, wainscoted room, hung with ancient tapestry, with high, mullioned windows, through which the cheering sun shone in masses of soft coloured light.

I was too weak, however, to think of my surroundings, and after this first glimpse closed my eyes in utter weariness. Day followed day, and still I remained in this semi-unconscious state. At last came a time when I awoke, feeling somewhat like my old self. Then I began to wonder where I could be and glanced around me for some one to question.

A prim-looking, elderly woman approached and kindly asked me how I felt.

“Fit to battle with any and all enemies of our noble King,” quoth I in jest.

A cloud passed over her face. "Far better, it seemeth to me, fair Sir, to think of thanking God for thy recovery, than to long for shedding man's blood in the cause of bigotry and tyranny."

A hasty reply was on my lips, and I fear I should have uttered it, ungrateful as it might appear, if at that moment the door had not softly opened, and shown me framed as in a picture her whom I thought that I had killed—Miss Dorothy!

As she saw me awake and conscious, she was about to beat a retreat, but at a cry from me she paused, and with a deep blush mantling her cheeks that had been so pale and drawn, she came forward and knelt at my side, whereupon the elderly woman walked quietly a few paces away and stood looking out of one of the high windows.

"Oh! Joscelyn, my love, art truly thyself again?" whispered Dorothy.

For a second I lay with closed eyes as one dreaming. It seemed so hard to fathom. She who to me was Dorothy, yet was not the *real*

Dorothy, she who had obtained Lord Raglan's despatches and had rendered me dishonoured before the King, she who had saved me from captivity and from death, she who had been pierced and almost killed by my own sword, now confessed me as her love, *her* Joscelyn!

Hardhearted would he be who could resist such love! As for me, with all the mystery that hovered about her I felt that I loved this maiden with all a man's unsullied devotion. Yet I felt a craven coward at having wounded her with my own sword. Heedless of the attendant woman I raised myself and clasped Dorothy in my arms, and with kisses and tears pressed her to my heart. Alas! I had overestimated my strength, for with a cry I fell back unconscious, having re-opened the wound in my head.

After that the days passed as one long dream of bliss. Dorothy was ever with me, though never alone. King and Church, brother and duty, were forgotten, as our love built airy castles for the future or delighted in the sweet companionship of the present.

Over and over again, as I grew stronger, I made her tell me the explanation of the mystery that had so long been associated with her.

She indeed was Dorothy Arden, but not the one who first had been pointed out to me, who was her cousin, Sir Gerald Arden and Colonel Arden being brothers. Not only did they bear the same name but also was their resemblance most remarkable, so much so that my Dorothy now confessed to me that it was no unusual thing for them to be taken one for the other. Unlike his loyal brother, Sir Gerald, Colonel Arden had espoused the cause of the King's enemies and held a high command in Cromwell's army. Dorothy and her mother, however, were at heart loyal adherents of the King, and when the war entered Monmouthshire they had sought the protection of Lady Dorothy, who was then visiting Raglan Castle.

There Jervis, an old family retainer, yet a man as vile and rascally as ever trod the ground, had followed her. It appeared that his father had once been in the employ of my

family, the Vernons, but owing to a terrible crime that he had committed my sire had handed him over to the authorities by whom he had been executed, a short time before my tale opens. Jervis had been present at the execution, and then and there had vowed to be amply revenged on each and every Vernon.

Here follows a portion of Dorothy's story that with blushes she now admitted had never been truly told to me. Jervis, it appears, although a retainer of the family, was of rather better extraction than most men in such positions, and boasting of some little learning, he had had the audacity to aspire to Mistress Dorothy's hand, presuming on the familiarity with which he had always been treated and emboldened by Colonel Arden's absence. He, with several comrades, had come upon Mistress Dorothy in the wood on the day that I had stood her in such good stead, and there had proffered his degrading love, adding with a scowling leer, that war made all persons equal.

Bad as he was known to be, until then Mis-

tress Dorothy had never been afraid of him, but at this declaration she had screamed, whereupon Jervis, in a fit of rage, had struck her and with his companions had fled.

After our meeting in the woods, Dorothy with her mother and one male attendant, faithful David Ker, had hastened to Monmouth, thinking that they might be safer there. On the taking of the town they had at once sought Lord Raglan's protection. While there the faithful David had brought to her the information that on the night before the taking of the town, he had been at an ale house, and there to his horror had heard Jervis, while in his cups, talk of an immediate attack on Vernon Hall and his intention of making away with the messenger whom Lord Raglan was to send to Lawley. How he was aware of this fact I do not know, nor did Dorothy.

Resolved to tell this to Lord Herbert, Dorothy had sought him in Monmouth, but as she reached his room, she heard me within. Uncertain for a moment what to do, she had

hesitated and at that instant had heard Lord Raglan give me my charge. In her anxiety, she had pulled the open door close, and seeing what she had done, had fled.

Dazed for a few moments by what she realized was my great danger she had not known what to do, and in her agitation was again tempted to tell the whole story to my Lord Herbert. Maidenly shyness, however, triumphed for the moment over love's fear, for she felt that she could not reveal to him the state of her feelings for me. In those days lads and maids loved when scarce they knew each other. As a last alternative she had confided her secret to Lady Arden, her mother, and between them they had devised the brave but very wild plan of intercepting me ere I could reach Tinterne.

With David as escort she with her maid had started, but the storm had almost spoiled their plan. Compelled to stop, they had sought the farmhouse, where lived an old couple who had once been family servants of the Ardens. Here she had rested, while David rode on with

the maid a few miles further, returning to the farmhouse shortly after I had left it. The old couple had not been taken into her confidence, and seeing that they regarded me with great suspicion, she had determined to give me no sign of recognition.

As I now think of the plan she carried out, it seems almost beyond comprehension how a maiden could have conceived so boldly and acted so decidedly. Alack! the maids of to-day are made of weaker stuff, and fain would leave the show of bravery to the sterner sex! To return, however, to my tale.

On my arrival at the farmhouse she had determined to acquaint me then and there with what she had heard, as soon as she could do so without being observed.

Quietly leaving the kitchen, as I have already related, she had penned me a note, and on David's return she had sent him with it to me, to her bitter disappointment seeing him return with the information that I had disappeared. At her bidding he had searched outside, and had seen in the ground, now soft

from the rain, my footsteps leading to the forest path.

This had decided her. David was despatched with a new letter for me, and on returning with my verbal message, together they had ridden to Tinterne, her maid joining her shortly below the farmhouse. This maid gave Mistress Dorothy the startling news that Jervis and his outlaw band had passed but a short time before.

Full of alarm for my safety, and also in fear of being discovered, she had hastened to Tinterne and there had found me and obtained the despatches. David and her maid awaited her at a point half a mile down the river, and then had apprised her that Jervis and his men were near. In trying to ride around them, she had reached Lawley's command too late to be of service, and had consequently destroyed the despatches.

She had fearlessly taken this ride and had essayed this bold errand to save me from Jervis, who had arranged to murder me ere I reached my destination. She had thought

that she would be in little danger herself, though in any event she was willing to brave it for me.

It was chance alone that the troopers, who had taken John and myself prisoners, sought the farmhouse to which she had returned on her way to her mother. Later she and her mother found a body of Parliamentary troopers ready to escort them, by her father's orders, to Cromwell's army. While on the road her father had died. Cromwell received them courteously, for he had greatly liked Colonel Arden. What was her horror when some little while later she found me a prisoner of Cromwell's. She had thrown herself on Cromwell's mercy, and though at first unwilling, he at last had consented to give her the passport for me to pass the lines safely, with the understanding that I would leave the camp that night. Shortly afterwards she and her mother returned to Arden Manor, and while there she heard of Jervis's plan to burn down the Hall. Emboldened by her former adventure she had dis-

guised herself as a man, and had ridden first to Raglan Castle to leave in person her message for me, and then to Vernon Hall to warn those there. Too late she had arrived, for the noble old house was already on fire.

When she had seen my troopers dash across the lawn, and had noticed me pursuing Jarvis, the wild idea had seized possession of her, that if she followed me she might save me from some fate that she felt was impending. Snatching a sword from David, who stood by, she had sprung on her horse and galloped after us. A good swordswoman, for she had once learned the manly art at home from her tutor who was skilled in the fence, she feared not to use her weapon.

As she thrust and killed Jarvis, too late she saw my point at her breast, but she was content to die, now that my enemy was dead and I, as she thought, mortally wounded. Though badly hurt she had retained consciousness, and when later my troopers had found us in the woods and had told her that I was not seriously hurt, she had commanded them to

bear me away to Arden House, a long day's journey, yet better than the half-ruined hall of my father's.

Here under skilful nursing we had both recovered, but Dorothy far more quickly, soon being able to give me her own care and attention.

It may seem a curious, rambling tale, but to me it was as the most delightful romance, and again and again we lived over its events, sometimes illustrating choice passages in such a way as to bring the roses to the cheeks of sweet Mistress Dorothy.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW I WAS AGAIN TAKEN PRISONER.



SAW Dorothy growing wan and anxious. Ever since I began to improve, naught but bad news had reached us. Already she had begun to think that all was hopeless and to dread the time I should leave for the field.

Alack! I had little to cheer her with, save the notice of my new honours, yet what lovers can mourn and look on the dark side of life when together!

I lingered longer than I should have done, too long for safety, for ere I was ready to depart, word was brought that a body of Fairfax's troopers were riding towards the house.

Dorothy's face grew deathly pale, for there seemed no escape. Her quick woman's wit, however, came to her aid.

"Quick, Joscelyn, come hither," cried she, and half dragging me along the great hall to

her own sleeping apartment, she closed the door, and pressing a panel in the wainscoting, showed me a space behind it. Into this, at her beseeching me, I climbed and the panel was closed on me. Ere it did so, Dorothy exclaimed: "Joscelyn, here lies thy hope of safety, for they dare not disturb me in my own room."

Alas! She knew not these canting Roundheads! In any event I had my good sword, though I determined I would first use every chance to escape detection.

The Roundheads entered the house and searched it as far as they could. At last they reached the door of Dorothy's room and finding it fastened, knocked long and loudly for admittance. A pause, and then, with a voice singularly calm and self-possessed, Dorothy exclaimed, "What means this noise? Hast news of the war?"

"Ay, war indeed!" cried a rough, harsh voice. "Open! We want to find the King's minion, the friend and follower of tyrants, whom we will smite as Israel did Sihon, the King of the Amorites."

"But, good sirs, surely ye will not force a way here, since no one is with me!"

"Open and let us see," came between more knocks.

Fearful of confirming their suspicions, Dorothy arose, and hurriedly opened the door, while I shook with mingled fear for her and anger at these canting ruffians.

In rushed half a score of men, booted and spurred and stained with mud. Somewhat awed at Dorothy's presence, for she stood there like a queen, with head thrown back and a look of intensest scorn on her finely chiselled face, they shrank back abashed, muttering "the bird hath flown."

Their leader, however, had less fine feelings. To Dorothy's remark, "Methinks, sir, this is a most unwarrantable intrusion; I pray thee retire," he answered (and I longed to spring out and smite him as he did so), "Let us be the judge of that. If thou dost harbour King's men thou must expect treatment fitting for such."

He examined every corner of the room,

peering under every piece of furniture, and then taking a pike from one of his followers, he took the handle and began to tap the wainscoting, to see if it was hollow. Slowly he proceeded, as if he suspected a hiding-place and wished to torture Dorothy to the utmost.

When almost at the panel behind which I was hidden, there sounded the solemn toll of a bell. Half in surprise, half in terror, the Roundhead dropped his pike, as he cried, "What is that?"

"Only the summons to Vespers! Methinks 'tis naught to stop thee in thy investigation," uttered Dorothy, in scornful tones. Then taking the pike from the floor, she began, as if it was the most natural thing in the world to do, herself to tap the *next* panel after the one that concealed me, and continuing until all had been touched except that one, did it in such a way that none of them ever suspected that one had been passed in the moment of surprise caused by the ringing of the bell.

The leader growled his dissatisfaction, but evidently convinced that no one was hidden there, left the room with his men.

I was just about to leave my hiding-place when again we heard them approaching, this time dragging in a poor wretch, who, with sword pointed at his heart and blunderbuss at his head, was made to confess that there was in that chamber a secret panel, but where he knew not.

When it was found that nothing more could be extracted from him, the leader bade his men take him out, and then turning to Dorothy, demanded her to show him the place.

"Hast not already examined?" quoth she, brave as a lion; "why this farce?"

With a vile oath, he cried that he had no time to lose, and springing forward grasped her arm with his iron glove so as to wring from her an exclamation of pain, which instantly she tried to muffle.

Prisoner or no prisoner, I could stand it no longer. I could not see my loved one so treated, for though indeed the panel prevented bodily sight, I was perfectly aware of all that went on. Pushing the panel aside I sprang down, and seizing the coward in my hand,

sent him with such force spinning to the opposite wall that he sank down stunned.

The noise, however, brought in his comrades and in a moment I was bound and a prisoner, and with scarcely a moment for any farewell, was hurried away choking with anger and despair, as I saw Dorothy fall, fainting on the floor.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW MY STORY ENDS.

FORTUNE, however, had not utterly forsaken me. The troopers who had me in their charge were hurrying towards Raglan, which was still holding out. Hope began to spring up in my heart. I studied some way to evade the watchfulness of my guards. Happily I was rescued without effort of mine, for when a day's ride from the Castle, we were surprised by a body of Cavalier soldiers, who, swooping down with a cheer, put to flight Fairfax's troopers, leaving me to be welcomed by my old friends of Raglan. We had some difficulty reaching the Castle, only managing to cut through the besiegers by riding down on them at full speed, when they scattered, thinking a large reinforcement was at hand.

Things in the Castle were at a bad pass. The besiegers, now commanded by Fairfax

himself, greatly outnumbered us. Nevertheless, for days did Fairfax in vain try to negotiate with the Marquis. He was determined to hold out to the very last. In the meantime the enemy had pushed their mortar guns within sixty yards of the Castle, and the list of the wounded was continually being increased. Already we were beginning to feel the effects of the constant watching and spare diet, for we were doing all that we could do to prepare for a long siege, a hard matter for me, full of anxiety as I was about Dorothy.

This was bad enough, but now came the news that the Castle was being mined and that soon we would have its mighty walls burying us in their fall.

The Marquis determined to inquire into the truth of this, and chose me to undertake the task. As it would be impossible for me to leave by the gate without being discovered, he bethought himself of an old underground passage, which going through the vaults and dungeons of the Castle came out some half mile away.

I acquiesced in the suggestion and late that night essayed to make the attempt.

The Marquis himself showed me the way. He led me to a narrow winding stair concealed in the wall of the mighty Keep, and we began to descend.

Down, down, down we went, until I was dizzy with the turning. Down, down, down until no longer were there the cross-shaped loopholes even dimly to light the way. Down, down, down until we reached the dungeons, with their chilling damp and their earthen smell.

Then pointing to a narrow passage-way, the Marquis lighted another torch and handed it to me.

"Here we part, if thou 'rt not afraid of the attempt or of this grewsome place," and he eyed me inquiringly.

I assured him that I minded it not, and after seeing him disappear up the winding stair, I continued my journey. As I passed several of the dungeons, I could not help but pause and look in.

I raised my torch and by its light saw the grim stone walls, moist with the damp, and in some places marked with rude carving, generally of crosses and names, the iron ring inserted in the wall, to which many an one had been fastened, and the grating through which the gaoler had handed in the food if he handed it in at all, and I shuddered, for it seemed horrible to think of such a fate as being immured there, and still more horrible to think of man dooming his fellows to such a lot.

The passage-way was narrow and uneven, and especially so after I reached the outside of the Castle, which I could tell from the reduced height of the vaulting.

At last, after what seemed an age, during which the bats several times almost put out my torch, I saw an opening ahead of me, and carefully approaching it, I looked out.

Before me lay part of the enemy's camp, some of the troopers being almost near enough to touch. I disliked to return unsuccessful from my search, so I decided to wait until sleep had settled on the camp.

Soon one by one I saw the troopers nod. I looked carefully around. All seemed to be quiet. Then I pushed aside the bushes growing thickly in front of the passage-way, completely concealing it, and crawled out. Little by little I made my way past the body of the enemy, around to the line of earth-works that they had erected.

I easily avoided the few sentinels, and satisfying myself as to the truth of the story of the mine, I started for the Castle gate as I had arranged with the Marquis.

In doing so I was discovered, and immediately shots were fired at me and the camp was aroused. If it had been in the day instead of at night, I doubt if I could have escaped.

As it was I barely reached the Castle, wounded at that, the massive gates opening and closing just in time to receive against it the last shots directed at me.

The Marquis, on hearing my report, decided to surrender, as the enemy had now mounted guns on a bit of rising ground near by, and our garrison had already been reduced one-half.

It was a sad day when we gave up Raglan. General Fairfax, however, acted in a right noble manner to us. He allowed us to march out with colours flying, drums beating, and trumpets sounding, with horses, arms, and ammunition, on condition, however, of our force disbanding within a ten-mile limit.

It was a sad leave-taking, but sadder still was the sight of Fairfax's troopers, assisted by the peasants, demolishing the noble pile. So strongly built was it, however, that some portions resisted the greatest efforts to pull them down, and it was only by the aid of mining and fire that the noble structure, with its towers and battlements, was dismantled and opened to the elements, its ruins long to remain as a relic of departed grandeur.

Many of the gentlemen were allowed safe conduct to their houses, but with the Marquis I was taken to London, and placed with him in the Tower, fortunately still being allowed to attend him.

Here ends my career as a soldier of good King Charles. The Marquis did not long sur-

vive his confinement in the Tower, but soon wasted away, being well on to ninety ere he died.

To the last, however, he showed a Christian resignation and fortitude hard to equal, and ever won my regard, so unmixed was he with any lower motive.

At his death, I was permitted to leave the Tower, on condition of leaving the country. Heartsick, for the King had some time since been martyred and no longer was there hope of his cause, I accepted the conditions, and being joined by Dorothy, we were quietly married and then made our way to Paris, where we lived in retirement many years.

And yet, though away from our home, those were happy and peaceful years, for in the society of Dorothy I came to forget the horrors of war, and the sad crimes of my native land.

When years afterwards, through Monk's stratagem, King Charles II ascended the throne and our good Mother Church was restored to the land, I returned to England,

where I was often blessed with a good word from the King.

And now, known as Sir Joscelyn, the owner of Vernon Hall and Arden House, as I write these memoirs of my life, I look up and see the beautiful face of Lady Vernon—my dear Dorothy—as with a hand caressing our youngest son, she smilingly listens to me as I read her these last few annals of my life, wherein, though our King—of saintly memory—died for the right, I but his humble follower, partly through mine own efforts, partly by his goodness, through the mercy of God, won me a name and a place and gained me what far exceeds either—my beloved Dorothy.

